

# ~~LEVEL~~ DRAGON ROUGE (2)

The Rescue of Hostages in the Congo

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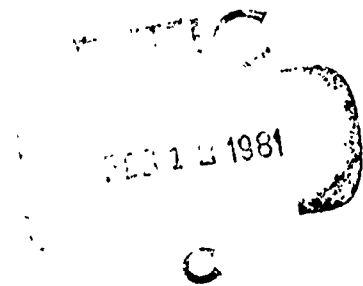
*Back cover: Rescued hostages being given medical aid during the evacuation flight from Stanleyville.*

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# **DRAGON ROUGE**

*2*

## **The Rescue of Hostages in the Congo**



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# **DRAGON ROUGE :**

## **The Rescue of Hostages in the Congo,**

by

**Fred E. Wagoner**

11 1989

National Defense University  
Research Directorate  
Washington, DC 20319

Opinions, conclusions, and recommendations expressed or implied within are solely those of the author, and do not necessarily represent the views of the National Defense University, the Department of Defense, or any other Government agency.

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## Foreword

International terrorism and the seizure of hostages for political purposes have become all too familiar events. In Africa, the Middle East, Western Europe, England—no area seems to be immune—innocent civilians are being seized and held by those wishing to achieve ideological and political goals. As of this writing, revolutionaries in Iran have held the American Embassy and more than 50 embassy personnel for 271 days. Attempts to deal with such incidents challenge the talents of diplomats and the stratagems of the military—efforts by both have failed thus far to obtain release or rescue of the hostages in Iran.

Although these recurring acts of terrorism and violence have become almost commonplace as we enter the 1980s, the taking of hostages for political ends was an uncommon occurrence as recently as the 1960s. Therefore, when rebels held hostage American consular personnel and other civilians in Stanleyville, the Congo, in 1964, the United States was confronted with a unique crisis situation.

In this exhaustively researched account, Colonel Fred Wagoner presents a chronological narrative of the events leading to the Belgian-American operation, DRAGON ROUGE, which successfully rescued Americans and Belgians held hostage in Stanleyville for 111 days. Based primarily on recently declassified and other original, unpublished sources, it is the compelling story of the ordeal of the hostages. It is also a story of decisionmaking in crisis, and an instructive account of how an international hostage crisis was managed. There are interesting insights into the complex factors, both domestic and international, which must be weighed in crisis decisionmaking, and an exploration of how the views of allies, adversaries, and the Third World were accommodated.

This is a timely contribution to the literature on crisis management, dealing as it does with the particularly perplexing issue of the seizure of hostages. With no surcease in world violence in view, we must not neglect historical experience for lessons learned in managing these events.



R. G. GARD, JR.  
Lieutenant General, USA  
President

## **About the Author**

Colonel Fred E. Wagoner, US Army (Retired), researched and wrote this manuscript while assigned as a Senior Research Fellow at the National Defense University in 1977-1978. Following a series of assignments in the Field Artillery after graduation from the United States Military Academy in 1948, he began studies as an Africa foreign area specialist, earning a Master's Degree in African Studies in 1964, and a Doctorate in International Relations and Organization in 1968, both degrees awarded by The American University. Colonel Wagoner has served over 8 years in Africa—Rhodesia, 1962; Burundi, 1964; Rwanda, 1964-66; the Republic of South Africa, 1970-74; the Ivory Coast, 1975-77. Retired from active duty in August 1978, Colonel Wagoner is now living in Columbia, South Carolina.

## Acknowledgments

In the almost 2 years spent in researching, writing, and securing policy and security clearances for the publication of this study, I became indebted to many people, both in and out of government. Space and my memory do not permit acknowledgment of every contribution.

Dr. James M. Erdman of the University of Denver was the first person contacted, and it is to him I owe greatest gratitude. Dr. Erdman, who was conducting parallel research, unselfishly shared copies of material he had gathered, notes on interviews and correspondence with key participants, and his personal thoughts.

My thanks and appreciation go next to those participants in this episode of history who with great courtesy opened their homes and offices, answered telephones and letters, and otherwise provided me with their explanations, opinions, experiences, and anecdotes—many of which, in order to prevent possible embarrassment, I have either not footnoted or have disguised as coming from "a high government official." I have arranged these contributors according to the various geographic or bureaucratic vantage points from which they viewed the events of 1964, and then chronologically in the order in which they were contacted. As viewed from:

- The Congo: Ambassador G. McMurtrie Godley; Ambassador Monteagle Stearns; Major General Donald V. Rattan; and Mr. David Grinwis.
- Brussels: Mr. Robert M. Beaudry and General (Ret.) Russell E. Dougherty.
- The State Department and the White House: Governor W. Averell Harriman; Ambassador Joseph Palmer, II; Mr. Walker Diamanti; Ambassador William Schaufele; Mr. William Brubeck; and Mr. Walter Rostow.
- The Pentagon: Mr. William E. Lang; Lieutenant Colonel Raymond E. Burrell; Colonel (Ret.) Edward E. Mayer; Major General (Ret.) Theodore Antonelli; and General (Ret.) Harold K. Johnson.

For indispensable readership and clerkmanship I am indebted to personnel in the Research Directorate of the National Defense University at Fort McNair, and particularly to "the five" who read the manuscript and provided comments most valuable in arriving at the finished product: Captain John J. McIntyre; Dr. I. B. Holley, Jr.; Commander Frederick T. Daly; Lieutenant Colonel Cloyd H. Pfister; and Lieutenant Colonel Verna S. Kellogg. I must also acknowledge the many contributions of Ms. Evelyn Lakes, the editor in charge of production of this book.

Finally, I owe a special word of sincere thanks to my wife, Jane, who provided the encouragement and sustained enthusiasm to keep me on course during the 2 years I was engaged in preparing this study.

**Fred E. Wagoner**

# Introduction

1

*The ANC was retreating from in front of the Consulate and rebels were again moving in single file down the road, pointing at the Consulate with what appeared to be aggressive intentions. These rebels about ten in number were armed. Following plans conceived the previous day in the event of an attack on the Consulate . . . the four Americans withdrew to the large vault and locked both the soundproof and steel doors and placed a heavy safe against the steel door for added protection. During this operation which took perhaps only one minute the rebels began firing from the main road with automatic weapons on the Consulate. This fire broke all windows in front of the Consulate and shattered furniture.*

*After retreating to the vault we could hear the rebel troops firing and hammering at the locked front door of the Consulate. During the three minutes it took the rebels to break open the door, a message was sent on the teletype machine, but because of incoming traffic this did not get through. . . . For approximately one hour the Simbas attempted to break through the steel door [of the vault], in the process destroying the combination lock. However, because they used rather unsophisticated methods—that is, simply brute force and firing automatic weapons at it, they were unable to make much impression on the door. .*

*We also learned later from the local employees that the Simbas, if they had succeeded in entering the vault, intended to kill us. They were of course aware we composed the staff of the American Consulate.\**

\*David Grinwis, "A Journal of the Experiences of the Staff of the American Consulate in Stanleyville from 1 August through 29 November 1964," unpublished manuscript, pp. 5-7. This quotation, and all subsequent entries in italics, are extracts from a journal dictated by David Grinwis, American Vice-Consul in Stanleyville in August 1964, after his rescue and return to Washington in November 1964. The journal entries were based on notes made by Grinwis on small scraps of paper which he hid from his captors.

On the early afternoon of 5 August 1964, insurrectionists of the Popular Army of Liberation of self-commissioned "General" Nicolas Olenga, calling themselves *Simbas* (lions) and appointed with *dawa* (medicine) to turn enemy bullets to water, seized Stanleyville, the capital of Haut Congo Province, and the third largest city in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.\* The central government troops of the *Armée Nationale Congolaise* (ANC) put up little resistance and for the most part melted into the bush.

Present in Stanleyville and vicinity on that Wednesday afternoon were 30 Americans. These included five male members of the United States Consulate, four of whom were in the Consulate when the *Simbas* entered the city and broke open the Consulate door. Also in "Stan," as it was called by old Congo hands, were approximately 1,500 foreigners from roughly 25 nations, including some 600 Belgians. Few anticipated that they were all, except for a few isolated escapees, to be sealed into the environs of the city for almost 4 months. They would be, in fact, hostages, held both by the Popular Army and by geography, for Stanleyville is located dead in the center of the African continent. And for the Belgians and Americans there was to be a special distinction: they were to be declared "prisoners of war."

Ten minutes before dawn on 24 November 1964, 111 days after Stanleyville and its foreign community had been sealed off by the Popular Army of General Oleriga, a Belgian paracommando regiment flown by a troop carrier wing of the US Air Force dropped and landed on the outskirts of Stanleyville in execution of Operation DRAGON ROUGE. Within 2 hours the airfield was secured, the center of the city penetrated, and approximately 300 "prisoners of war" released. Found lying dead in the streets of the city were 20 Belgians and 2 Americans. In the following few days, the joint rescue force would find another 48 massacred whites and evacuate over 2,000 foreigners to the capital, Leopoldville (Kinshasa).

Meanwhile, in other parts of the world, the United States was being accused of "premeditated aggression," "murderous operation," and "massive cannibalism."<sup>1</sup> Riots and demonstrations

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\*On 27 October 1971, under President Mobutu Sese Seko, the former Democratic Republic of the Congo was renamed Republic of Zaire. Stanleyville is now Kisangani and other place names in Zaire have been changed to disassociate them from the colonial period. In this study the names in effect in 1964 will be used; however, the initial listings and Map 1 will contain both names.

were carried out against Americans in Moscow, Prague, Sofia, and Nairobi. In Djakarta hundreds stormed the US Cultural Center, and in Cairo the new John F. Kennedy Memorial Library was sacked and burned to the ground. Stanleyville had suddenly emerged from the isolated geographical center of Africa to the sweaty footlights of the world stage, and to many Uncle Sam was the villain of the play.

---

This is the story of an international incident, one of the very first in modern times in which terrorism and seizure of hostages were used to promote political change—but one to be repeated later in Africa in places like Mogadishu, Entebbe, and Kolwezi.<sup>2</sup> It is another episode of horror, atrocity, and soon to be forgotten history. However, because the writer was able to gain access to records never before published, and to interview participants whose views on the subject have never before been elicited, recounting the episode hopefully will provide insights of enduring value. In many respects, the domestic, international, and bureaucratic issues present in 1964 are representative of issues being repeated with increasing frequency today, raising again and again the problem of protecting Americans serving and living abroad.

This is a case study in decisionmaking and crisis handling, or more specifically, it is a study of the setting and considerations around which decisions were made and a crisis handled. Except for a few chronological deviations, it is a narrative account of what occurred during those 111 days as viewed by many of the actors involved, and of what they wrote into the records. It is a study of the forces, events, pressures, and weighing of alternatives between the time officials thought "we might have a little problem here," to the time, 3 months later, when they realized they had, indeed, a massive problem on their hands. The problem had become, as is so often true in the interconnected world of today, one which could lose elections, topple governments, estrange allies, frustrate foreign policy goals—and kill a lot of people. It was not a crisis which threatened the national security of the United States, but it was a crisis that could have caused monumental embarrassment in high places had events unfolded differently. And well they might have.

Before turning to the events of those 111 days in August-November 1964, certain episodes and personalities of the period immediately preceding the events need to be reviewed briefly as to their impact upon the scenes about to be portrayed.

## Endnotes

1. Adlai Stevenson, "US Cites Illegal Interference in Support of Congo Rebellion," *Department of State Bulletin*, 4 January 1965, p. 15.

2. On 4 July 1976, Israeli paratroopers seized Entebbe Airport in Uganda and rescued hostages who had been hijacked a week before aboard an Air France flight. On 13 October 1977, four Palestinian terrorists seized a Lufthansa plane and demanded release of several imprisoned members of the Baader Meinhof gang in exchange for the passengers and crew. On October 17 the hijacked plane landed in Mogadishu, Somalia. Early the next morning West German commandos stormed the airliner, killed three hijackers, and rescued all hostages. On 14 May 1978, Katangan exiles living in Angola crossed the border into Zaire, seized Kolwezi and continued to advance north and east. French and Belgian paratroopers were flown in and the invaders withdrew, but only after murdering hundreds of civilians.

## Background

# 2

The Democratic Republic of the Congo, with its capital at Leopoldville, became independent on 30 June 1960, after 75 years of Belgian colonial rule. Within a few days the new nation seemed to represent the embodiment of all the pessimistic and "I told you so" prognostications ever uttered about independence in Africa. Observers and instant analysts were soon publishing books and articles with the words "crisis," "blood bath," and "disaster" in the titles. The Congo at independence had in fact become the "box of firecrackers" the Belgians had anticipated and about which they had clearly articulated their fears to John Gunther when he was traveling and writing *Inside Africa* 7 or 8 years earlier.<sup>1</sup>

Yet crisis following independence was not unusual in the post-World War II era. The transfer of power from colonial nations to new states was nearly always accompanied by some degree of upheaval. What was unexpected in the Congo case, however, was the violence, duration, and universality of the upheaval. Because the Congo is what it is and where it is, this upheaval was of particular interest to much of the world.

The Congo is roughly the size of the United States east of the Mississippi and, after Sudan, the second largest country in Africa. This landmass sits strategically in the middle of the continent, touching in June 1960 upon eight European colonies and one ex-colony,<sup>2</sup> each with its own colonial heritage threatening upheaval

and each certainly sensitive to any unrest in its big neighbor (see Map 1). Thus, when chaos did break out in the independent Congo, it became of immediate and often conflicting interest to France, Britain, Portugal, and of course Belgium—all friends and NATO partners of the United States. And because the Congo was producing about 8 percent of the world's copper, 80 percent of its industrial diamonds, 73 percent of its cobalt, 60 percent of the West's uranium, plus important quantities of gold, zinc, cadmium, manganese, columbium, and tantalum,<sup>3</sup> it was also of interest, immediate and long range, to potential enemies of NATO.

People create chaos—as instigators or as victims—and when the Belgians first seriously began to feel they might have a “box of firecrackers,” the demographic complexities must have seemed insurmountable: 14 million people divided into 70 major ethnic groups, each subdivided into hundreds of tribes and clans, with over 400 dialects. The problem they faced with the population was twofold: to redirect primary loyalty toward something higher than the ethnic group; and to educate without creating impatient demand for a growing share of responsibility in shaping the future. By 1960, after 75 years of colonial rule, the problem had been identified, but certainly not resolved.

Many considered that the Belgians had failed and, in granting independence so early, accused them of panic and surrender before the job was done. Belgium claimed, however, that given the speed and direction of the “winds of change” in Africa after World War II, and the limitations on its resources as a small nation, it had little chance or choice. Regardless, at independence the matches to light the firecrackers in the Congo were there: inter-ethnic conflicts easily kindled and interwoven with modern power politics; leaders with fragile power bases, neither experienced nor educated in handling the responsibilities they had demanded and received; and a proportionally huge mass of youth, exposed to broad perspectives and heightened aspirations, then quickly cast aside by a truncated educational and employment pyramid.

### **Kasavubu and Lumumba**

Before moving to the rapid sequence of events that quickly extinguished the rosy glow of independence and provided the backdrop for the DRAGON ROUGE story, two leading personalities need brief introduction. The birth of the new Republic brought to

power Patrice Lumumba as Prime Minister and Joseph Kasavubu as President. It was an alliance of expediency as their ideas and ideologies were poles apart.

Kasavubu was one of the founders of the Congolese independence movement. As early as 1946, at age 36, he was agitating for—almost unheard of in Africa at the time—equal pay for equal work. In the late 1950's he was the brain behind bloody riots in Leopoldville, for which he earned his letter "P," the imaginary badge of recognition awarded by early African nationalists to those who had served political sentences in colonial prisons. Though his grandfather had been a Chinese laborer on the Congo railroad, his grandmother was a Bakongo, and in this major tribal group, living around Leopoldville and the lower Congo basin, he found the source of his strength.

One pillar of Kasavubu's strength was his early political platform to restore the ancient Bakongo kingdom, a power throughout central Africa from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries. Pertinent to this study is that restoring this kingdom meant redrawing colonial boundaries to the north and south—an idea that had little appeal to France or Portugal with their neighboring colonies. Nor did it appeal to those African nationalists with whom Kasavubu would soon be dealing—nationalists who jealously guarded the preservation of colonial boundaries while preaching Pan-African nationalism and continent-wide unity transcending tribal loyalties. Therefore, it is a fair observation to say that President Kasavubu's popularity and power were strong around Leopoldville and its immediate vicinity, but somewhat suspect in other areas and across the Congo's borders.

Lumumba, on the other hand, was the Pan-African darling of Congolese politics. At independence in 1960, he was 35, dynamic, and had earned his "P" twice—once for misappropriating colonial funds while he was a village postal clerk and once for inciting riots in Stanleyville, his adopted home town. By one of those chance events that affect history, Lumumba alone had attended the 1958 All-African People's Conference in Accra—Kasavubu supposedly could not get his travel documents in order—and came away not only inspired by the spirit of African solidarity, but more important for the purposes of this study, known and recognized as a member of the club by the early fathers of African nationalism.<sup>4</sup> His *Movement National Congolais* (MNC) not only was the largest

political party in the Congo, but also had national as well as tribal following. So to the Belgians, as they moved the Congo toward independence, Lumumba seemed to represent the best chance to hold the new nation together. This hope did not last long.

### **Mutiny of the *Force Publique***

In reality, the Belgians put most of their hope for peace and order in the Congo after independence in the 69-year, almost unimpeachable record of the 24,000-man *Force Publique*, a combined frontier guard and police force. Except for a few previous incidents, all tribally based and quickly quashed, the *Force* had performed loyally and well through two world wars, numerous tribal revolts, and more recently, in its traditionally skull-bashing manner, against unruly nationalist demonstrators. The perceived loyalty and effectiveness of the *Force* was such that the politicians, while sitting at the Brussels Round Table planning the future order of things after independence, decided it best to leave the *Force* exactly as it was—composed of almost completely illiterate and poorly paid indigenous troops, feared by the masses, and officered entirely by white Europeans. Regarding the officers, they realized it took time to create a Congolese officer corps with which to entrust the maintenance of order, and the first Congolese officer was not scheduled to finish his training until 1963.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, white officers would have to be in command positions for quite some time to come.

Congolese troops, however, had other ideas about the meaning of independence. Only 4 days after independence, on 4 July 1960, troops in the camp outside Leopoldville, brandishing machetes at their white officers, broke into the armory. The next day other troops refused their officers' commands to march against their riotous comrades, and discipline began to break down throughout the *Force*. On the eighth, Lumumba relieved all of the 1,000-plus Belgian officers and began to appoint Congolese to their positions. By now, however, with or without an Africanized officer corps, soldiers of the *Force Publique* were running amok throughout the country and panic-stricken Europeans were fleeing in all directions.<sup>6</sup>

On July 10, the Belgian Government decided to protect its citizens, without invitation from the new sovereign republic, and began to fly in metropolitan troops—10,000 in all within 10 days.

With that, the honeymoon was over as far as any cooperation that may have existed between Belgium and the newly independent government. To the world, the Belgians appeared to be reconquering their lost colony. Kasavubu and Lumumba started looking everywhere for help—against Belgium, their own rampaging army, and against one of their own disloyal Congolese brothers, Moise Tshombe.

### **Moise Tshombe and the Katanga Secession**

The intervention of the Belgian Government was not completely without invitation. As the mutiny of the *Force Publique* was spreading, on 9 July 1960, Brussels received an appeal from the provincial government in Katanga, the southernmost province of the Congo, to send troops to restore order. Two days later, at the height of the mutiny and with Belgian troops flying into its capital, Elizabethville,<sup>7</sup> Katanga declared its independence—lopping off about one-fifth of the Congo's area, one-eighth of its people, and of more critical importance, almost all of its mineral resources accounting for about 80 percent of its total global exports.

The instigator of this stab in Leopoldville's back was Moise Kapenda ("Darling Moses") Tshombe, a 42-year-old leader of a confederation of Katanga tribes. Born into his father's successful businesses, related to Katanga royalty, educated at American Methodist schools, and favored by Belgian *colons*, Tshombe had never earned his "P." If Lumumba was regarded as the darling of African nationalists, Tshombe was perceived by most of his African brothers as an outsider and a stooge to colonialism.

The inner workings of Belgium's all-pervading *Société Générale* are beyond the scope of this brief background review, but suffice to say this giant conglomerate spreads across the boards of many of Europe's biggest financial houses. From its subsidiary, *Union Minière du Haut-Katanga*, controlling investments in Katanga alone, came tax revenues in 1959 to finance 90 percent of the cost to Belgium of its entire colonial administration. To many Belgians, Katanga was the Congo.

In the moves toward independence, the Belgian Government had resisted, under world and African pressure, efforts by Tshombe and his many powerful backers to form a separate republic in Katanga. With the mutiny of the *Force Publique*, however, with

Belgian citizens fleeing in panic and strong influences lobbying to save threatened investments, it is easy to understand Belgian support for Katanga's secession in 1960. What Belgium failed to foresee, but would remember well 4 years later in Stanleyville, was the intensity with which the world could cry outrage and the deaf ear many of its allies would give to its pleas for support.

The day after Tshombe's declaration of Katangese independence, on 12 July 1960, the Congo appealed to the United Nations (UN) for military assistance against Belgian "aggression." Two days later the UN Security Council, with Britain and France abstaining, passed a resolution calling for Belgium to withdraw its troops and authorized Secretary General Hammarskjöld to provide assistance to enable Congolese forces "to meet fully their tasks," but without providing specific details as to how this was to be done. On the day following, UN troops began to arrive in the Congo and Tshombe announced that they would not be allowed in Katanga.<sup>8</sup> Then, to increase the effectiveness of his expanding gendarmerie, he committed the ultimate sin for an African nationalist: he hired white mercenaries. Now, Tshombe was perceived not only as an outsider and a stooge to imperialism, but also as black Africa's arch villain.

In dealing with Katanga's secession, the United Nations took 2 1/2 years, launched three military invasions, and passed four more Security Council resolutions. This is a long story in itself. The problem of how the UN operations were to be paid for and by whom has never really been settled. Nor have basic questions been answered about the morality and legality of the use of arms by a world organization, in the name of peacekeeping, to overthrow a secessionist government. But finally on 21 January 1963, after Belgian troops had been pulled out and most of the mercenaries had left, UN troops marched into the last Katanga stronghold. A couple of months later Tshombe flew off to Paris into exile—considered a villain by most African nationalists, a hero by most Europeans, and the Congo's "only full-fledged pro-Western leader" by Barry Goldwater.<sup>9</sup>

### **Stanleyville, Mecca of Lumumbalism**

During the 2 1/2 years of Katanga's secession, intrigue, internal controversy, and bloodshed prevailed throughout the rest of the Congo. Several intervening episodes require brief elaboration for their impact on the future.

About a month after Tshombe's secession, a tribally-based splinter group of Lumumba's *Movement National Congolais* jumped on the secessionist bandwagon and declared independence for tiny, but diamond-rich, South Kasai Province on Katanga's border. This was too much for Lumumba and he grabbed for straws. He accepted an offer of aid from the Russians and 100 military trucks, 29 Ilyushin-14 aircraft, and 200 technicians were soon at his disposal.<sup>10</sup> By the end of August 1960, with Ilyushians ferrying Lumumba's troops, South Kasai was "reunited" after a genocidal massacre of over 1,000 Baluba tribesmen. But in the process both Lumumba and the Russians were discredited: in the West for "spreading Communism"; in the United Nations for military action outside its framework; in much of the world for the horrible bloodbath; and, of more immediate importance, in the view of President Kasavubu, for decisions and action without his coordination.

Kasavubu was quick to act. As president he exercised his constitutional prerogative and dismissed Lumumba as prime minister. The United Nations, sensing a threat to peace, immediately seized the local radio station and closed Leopoldville's airport to all but UN aircraft, thereby cutting off Lumumba's Ilyushian support. Ten days later Lumumba was confined to his residence—surrounded by a UN guard to prevent his arrest by Kasavubu, and by Kasavubu's troops to prevent his escape.<sup>11</sup> Five months and many intrigues later, on 13 February 1961, the world learned that Lumumba had been killed by "peasants" while trying to escape custody—near, of all places, Elizabethville, Tshombe's capital. Goldwater's "only full-fledged pro-Western leader" now appeared to many to be a murderer, and Lumumba of Stanleyville became a martyr.

Meanwhile, with Lumumba confined and with power tightly held in Leopoldville around Kasavubu and his Bakongos, Lumumba's supporters turned elsewhere to launch another rival regime against Kasavubu. On 16 November 1960, Antoine Gizenga, who had been a vice-premier under Lumumba, seized control of the provincial government at Stanleyville and began limited but fairly successful military operations against both Leopoldville and Elizabethville. By January 1962, however, UN and loyal Congolese troops had disarmed Gizenga's forces. He was soon arrested and figures little more in this study.

It is significant, however, that Gizenga's Stanleyville regime, before its downfall, received diplomatic recognition from Peking, Moscow, Cairo, and several other Bloc and African states. In April 1961, 2 months after Lumumba's death, the Yugoslavs established a diplomatic mission; a Russian mission arrived in July. Stanleyville, the center of a breakaway regime, became in the eyes of many the seat of the legitimate government for the entire Congo and, as Lumumba's adopted hometown (and especially after his death), the Mecca for Lumumbaism. Stanleyville had achieved its strategic importance for the events to be played in 1964.

### **Rumblings in Belgium**

Through all of this bloodshed and intrigue, and also significant for the future play of events, Belgium was experiencing its own convulsions, reflections in part of the turmoil in its former colony. The mutiny of the *Force Publique* and Katanga's secession brought rumblings against the Christian Social Party in power. Critics declared that Belgium's prestige had never been lower, charging that it had lied to the United Nations (the world) and that it was hiding behind humanitarian and moral pretexts, disguising with hypocrisy financial interests which all could perceive. "Never has our country been so isolated under the burden of the mistakes committed in her name," cried a former foreign minister.<sup>12</sup> News of Lumumba's murder, with accusations linking Tshombe and his Belgian connection, triggered a series of crises as Belgian Embassies were attacked in many capitals; in Cairo the Belgian Embassy was burned to the ground.

Elections were soon held in metropolitan Belgium, and in May 1961, the Socialist Party came to power. A new cabinet was installed, bringing in as deputy premier and foreign minister the internationally respected Paul-Henri Spaak—early promoter of European cooperation, one of the drafters of the UN Charter and president of the first General Assembly, and for the previous 5 years, NATO's Secretary General.

This change in government promoted a Catholic and labor-oriented resistance to any idea of government troops or francs being used to protect capitalist interests—signalling, of course, the end of Belgian support for Katanga's secession. Belgium in 1961 was sick of the Congo and tired of too close an involvement in its indigested affairs. This mood, as we shall see, would be prevalent as

the events of 1964 began to unfold. Under Spaak, the world statesman, Belgium was hoping to improve its world image with regard to its ex-colony.

## US Policy and Dissent

Throughout these first few years of turmoil following the Congo's independence, and through two administrations, US policy toward the Congo followed a remarkably consistent track. The impetus behind this policy can best be appreciated through a statement in late 1961 by Under Secretary of State George Ball:

Should the Congo crumble into chaos and become a successful object of Communist penetration, the Soviet bloc will have acquired an asset without price—a base of operations in the heart of Africa from which to spread its tentacles over this newest of continents.<sup>13</sup>

In sum, enjoying the fact that the Sino-Soviet Bloc of its day had had no previous stake in Africa, the goal of the United States in Africa was to insulate African problems from great power confrontation—especially when it came to a piece of terrain with the importance of the Congo. Happily this exercise in preventive diplomacy corresponded with the central objectives of most of the rest of Africa and the United Nations—a fact which the Soviets learned after they, as we have just seen, had burned their fingers over South Kasai and Gizenga's Stanleyville regime.

When the mutiny of the *Force Publique* broke out, Lumumba applied first to the United States for help; Eisenhower turned him over to the United Nations. From then on, the United States was the driving force behind the UN's finances, logistical efforts, five Congo resolutions, and determination—anything to effect unification, peace and keep the Communists out of the Congo.<sup>14</sup> Thus, on 12 December 1961, as the UN force was launching its second invasion into Katanga, President Kennedy refused to support a NATO motion calling for a cease-fire. A year later, preparing for the third and final onslaught, Kennedy added 21 more C-124 aircraft to the 6 already ferrying UN troops and supplies. As Secretary of State Rusk said: "The United Nations will not be prevented from fulfilling its mandate."<sup>15</sup>

While the US image in Africa may have reached an apogee as we drove the United Nations to fulfill its mandate, our Congo policies were attacked from many other quarters. To our allies

(including the Belgians), we appeared as a bull in a china shop, thrusting ourselves into situations without knowledge or experience in the complexities of Africa, and without responsibility for the broken pieces. In London and Paris, US intervention reopened the wounds of the Suez crisis of 1956. At home, dissent touched the more basic dilemmas: the Nation seemed to be pursuing policies running counter to its historic belief in the right of self-determination; the United States piddling economic interests in the Congo hardly merited letting the Nation be sucked into paying for the resolution of colonial legacies for which it had no responsibility. Dissent played heavily upon the Cold War: here was the United States taking rich resources away from a pro-Western government (Tshombe's) and putting them under a government infiltrated by Communists (Lumumba's). The domestic dissenters were prominent and bipartisan: among them were ex-President Hoover; ex-Vice-President Nixon; and Senators Dodd, Russell, Eastland, Dirksen, and, of course, Goldwater.

But success dampened dissent. In January 1963, after 2 1/2 years of blood and turmoil following independence in the Congo, and with Tshombe finally overthrown in Katanga, a high government official in the Kennedy administration felt able to boast:

The Congo is about to be free and whole again. It is moving toward law and order. The secessionist bubbles have burst. There are no uninvited foreign troops, no Communist enclaves, no "army of liberation."<sup>6</sup>

Officials should know better when talking about the Congo

## **Revolution**

In August 1963, with all the secessions overthrown and the Congo apparently at peace, Pierre Mulele, Minister of Education under Lumumba, Ambassador to Cairo under Gizenga, and frequent traveler behind the Iron Curtain, returned quietly to Kwilu Province, a Scotland-sized area east of Leopoldville. By January 1964, revolt had broken out throughout the province and an American woman missionary had been killed by "Mulelists." In October 1963, Christophe Gbenye, Minister of Interior under Lumumba and his self-proclaimed successor, fled Leopoldville across the Congo River to Brazzaville and founded the *Conseil*

*National de Libération* (CNL). Six months later Kivu Province and most of the eastern Congo were aflame, under attack by a rebel group calling itself the "Eastern Section" of the CNL. And in the east especially, Kasavubu's *Armée Nationale Congolaise* (ANC), offspring of the *Force Publique*, was melting into the bush in terror of ragtag units of *Simbas*, the lions, who could turn ANC bullets to water with their *dawa*.

The goal now of both these uprisings was no longer secession, but the complete overthrow of the existing order. The emphasis now was on a new patriotism and social justice—a second independence against a Leopoldville government viewed as corrupt and "sold out" to the West. As such it tapped grass root frustrations against the existing elite, which was considered as having been the sole beneficiary of independence. This represented something far more dangerous than the secessionist squabbles of the preceding few years. A new brutality was generated as the revolutionists demanded not only the overthrow of the old order, but also its total extermination.

Meanwhile, the United Nation's interest in the Congo waned—coinciding with its empty pocketbook. Preserving peace and order between factious Congolese no longer seemed to have the same compelling ring. Accordingly, after almost 4 years of contentious presence in the Congo, on 30 June 1964, the last UN troops were withdrawn. Secretary General U Thant, who had succeeded Hammarskjöld after the latter was killed in a plane crash,<sup>17</sup> reported to the Security Council that the immediate outlook in the Congo was "none too promising."<sup>18</sup> He was right; things began happening fast:

—On July 6, with rebels controlling about one-fifth of his country and advancing unchecked, President Kasavubu designated Moise Tshombe, recently returned from exile, as premier and asked him to form a government.<sup>19</sup> The US Ambassador in Brussels, who had had several opportunities to meet with Tshombe in Europe, reported his views to Washington and Leopoldville: "For what it [is] worth my impression [of] Tshombe was of engaging [a] tremendously ambitious but very slick operator who needs watching but with whom one might be able to do business."<sup>20</sup>

—In Cairo barely a week later, ministers preparing for the second summit conference of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and remembering Tshombe's use of mercenaries to support his secession and his alleged complicity in Lumumba's murder, declared that Tshombe's presence at the conference would not be desirable. Tshombe stayed home, the Congo was not represented, and the world had an augury of future troubles in Africa.

—On July 31, the American Consulate in Stanleyville reported that Europeans in the area were shaken by recent reports of atrocities committed by advancing rebels and were evacuating dependents. Stanleyville, however, "was not under active threat [of] takeover by rebel troops."<sup>21</sup>

—On August 4, advancing units of the rebel army broke into the outskirts of Stanleyville and withdrew after a brief firefight. The Americans reported that the Consulate flagpole had been shot at and the rope cut by gunfire, but that the "Consulate flag [was] still flying."<sup>22</sup>

—The next day, rebels broke down the door of the American Consulate and tried to kill the four officials locked in the Consulate vault.

## Endnotes

1. John Gunther, *Inside Africa* (New York: Harper Bros., 1955), p. 649

2. As of 30 June 1960, the Congo (Brazzaville) and the Central African Republic (Empire) were French colonies, Uganda, Tanzania, and Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) were British, Rwanda and Burundi were Belgian, and Angola, with Cabinda, was Portuguese. Of the Democratic Republic's neighbors, only Sudan was independent. See Map 1.

3. Colin Legum, *Congo Disaster* (Baltimore: Penguin Books Inc., 1961), p. 42

4. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

5. Crawford Young, *Politics in the Congo* (Richmond, Virginia: The William Byrd Press, Inc., 1965), p. 314

6. For example, the Belgian population of Leopoldville was reduced from 18,000 to 2,500 after the mutiny, in Stanleyville from 5,000 to 300 (Legum, *Congo Disaster*, p. 125.)

- 7 Lubumbashi Katanga Province is now Shaba Province
- 8 Within a month the UN force totalled more than 13,000 troops from 24 nations
- 9 Howard M. Epstein, ed., *Revolt in the Congo 1960-64* (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1965), p. 143.
- 10 Legum, *Congo Disaster*, p. 141
- 11 Young, *Politics in the Congo*, p. 330
- 12 Victor Larock, as quoted in Legum, *Congo Disaster*, 17 August 1960, p. 160
- 13 George W. Ball, "The Elements of Our Congo Policy," *Department of State Publication 7326*, December 1961, p. 2
- 14 During the entire UN operation, the United States transported 118,091 troops and 18,596 tons of cargo into or out of the Congo, and 1,991 troops and 3,642 tons of cargo within the Congo. (Ernest W. Lefever, *Crisis in the Congo*, (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1965), p. 134 )
- 15 Epstein, *Revolt in the Congo*, p. 117
- 16 Harlan Cleveland, quoted by Warren Unna, *The Washington Post*, 18 January 1963
- 17 UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld was killed on 17 September 1961, near Ndola, Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), where he was flying to meet Moïse Tshombe in an effort to resolve Katanga's secession
- 18 Epstein, *Revolt in the Congo*, p. 156
- 19 President Kasavubu was no supporter or friend of Tshombe. The pressure behind Tshombe's appointment came from the Chief of the Congolese Army (ANC), Major General Joseph Mobutu, one-time sergeant in the *Force Publique*. For a detailed account of Tshombe's return to power, see Centre de Recherche et d'Information Socio-Politique, *Congo 1964, Political Developments of a Developing Nation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 123-184
- 20 Message, Embassy Brussels 2105 to Department of State, 25 June 1964
- 21 Message, US Consulate Stanleyville 98 to Department of State (received 010605 August 1964)
- 22 Message, US Consulate Stanleyville 115 to Department of State (received 041410 August 1964)

# August

# 3

*Because of the fact we were not certain if the Simbas had left a guard in the Consulate we did not attempt to leave the vault until about 2100 when it was fairly certain that no one had remained in the Consulate. Emerging from the vault, which took about 15 minutes because of the heavy safe against the door which had to be removed, we immediately turned on the master switch and fully illuminated the Consulate building. We then composed the messages which were sent Flash to Washington and Leopoldville.*

## Operation FLAGPOLE

One can imagine the feelings of the four staff members of the American Consulate in Stanleyville as they emerged from the refuge of the dark vault the evening of 5 August 1964, 8 or so hours after their would-be executioners had tried to shoot down the vault door. The Consul, Michael Hoyt, had arrived on station only a couple of weeks before, and only 4 days before had cabled Washington that the situation was calm, that effective measures were being taken against the rebel threat, and that the "short term stability seems assured." On the afternoon of the fourth, the "short term stability" was such that Hoyt had evacuated his wife and young son.

One can imagine also the feelings of the US Ambassador in Leopoldville, G. McMurtrie Godley, whose decision it was for the

staff to remain behind in Stanleyville "for [the] time being" as the rebels advanced.<sup>2</sup> For the record he had instructed only three staff members to remain. Hoyt; Vice-Consul David Grinwis; and Communicator James Stauffer. All other Americans, official and unofficial, were to be offered evacuation plane rides. Unfortunately, two other consular communicators, who were supposed to be on the last plane out, were cut off from the airport by the rapid advance of the Simbas into the city—Donald Parkes caught in the Consulate, and Ernest Houle in his apartment in the city. Unfortunately also, none of the 25 or so other Americans, mostly missionaries and their families, wanted to leave their stations—notwithstanding advice from the Consulate that they should do so.<sup>3</sup>

Such personal decisions are thought inspiring in the light of the Congo's history of violence during the previous 4 years. Just to refresh memories: as the rebels advanced during the previous month, there were reports that they had brutally murdered eight Belgians, including two Catholic priests and two young sons of a mining official.<sup>4</sup> But missionaries in the Congo are a pretty stoic and devoted lot, with a long tradition of self-sacrifice under primitive and trying conditions. They had seen difficult times before in the Congo.

For the American officials it was a different story. Consulates are established to serve Americans abroad and to be the eyes and ears of their parent embassy. The capture of Stanleyville had given the rebels their first major provincial capital, a city that had gained international recognition in 1961 under the brief Gizenga regime and as the Mecca of Lumumbaism, and that could again receive recognition by Communist and other governments waiting in the wings to show their opposition to Kasavubu and Tshombe. If this happened Hoyt and staff had reason to be there. Hoyt felt this mission as he telexed Leopoldville immediately after the ordeal in the vault: we [the US Government] "cannot retreat into shell while events unfold." He proposed to seek out authorities, protest the attack, and "await developments."<sup>5</sup>

By now Ambassador Godley was reassessing his decision to maintain a diplomatic presence in the face of the rebel advance. Orders went out from Leopoldville to his two other Consulates at Bukavu and Elizabethville to evacuate at the first threat of a rebel takeover. He then put his staff to work, with State Department

encouragement, planning Operation FLAGPOLE to recover Hoyt and his four staff members.

The plan called for creating a small force of embassy military staff, embassy volunteers having previous military service, and the Marine security guard. The Congolese Air Force would be called upon to conduct a strafing attack around the Consulate while the force landed by helicopter beside the Consulate flagpole.<sup>6</sup> The force was to seize the Consulate and evacuate the five American officials. The signal for launching the operation would be given from the Consulate by means of the positioning of a green car. If the car was parked in front of the Consulate, the operation was "GO"; if the car was not in front, it was "NO GO."

On the sixth, the force moved to Lisala (Map 1), 300 miles downriver from Stanleyville. Everything was set for the morning of the seventh, but that morning Hoyt cabled the Ambassador advising that the operation should be called off. He reported that there were too many Simbas in the immediate vicinity of the Consulate and that Ernest Houle was still in his apartment in the city and did not feel he could get to the Consulate. Then too, there was the possibility of reprisal against the missionaries, for the same reason the American officials felt reluctant to desert their colleagues in the diplomatic corps. Besides, Simbas had confiscated the green car. To one official in the Embassy "It was a half-assed operation anyway."

*During the morning [August 6] we composed three messages and sent them on to Leopoldville and Washington. We also discussed via the SSB [radio] the operation FLAG POLE. The contacts on the SSB with Leo were as discreet as possible.*

*At dusk Simbas visited the Consulate, apparently with the mission of determining if ANC troops were hiding there. They attempted to enter the vault in which Stauffer and Parkes were still operating and threatened Grinwis and Hoyt with death if the vault were not opened. Fortunately as it was clear that the vault had been fired on and because of the destruction of the area in the immediate vicinity of the vault the Simbas appeared to realize that it was impossible to enter. Furthermore they appeared drugged and their attention span was limited. The Simbas also demanded at gunpoint, and therefore received, keys to all the Consulate vehicles except the Ford belonging to Mr. Stauffer and the Consulate jeep. They also took the white*

*Volkswagon belonging to the Vice-Consul's secretary but returned with it a half hour later because of a flat tire. Visits by various Simbas, many of whom seemed to be under the influence of hemp, continued until dark.*

*On the morning of August 7 we decided to cancel the FLAG POLE Operation: it was impossible to implement securely because of the constant presence of armed rebels in the Consulate vicinity.*

### **Reactions in Washington and Brussels**

In Washington during the hot summer of 1964, the plight of the Americans in Stanleyville could not have come at a worse time, at least from the point of view of mustering support, or even interest, behind something like an Operation FLAGPOLE. Ranger 7 had just given Americans their first close-up view of the moon's surface, leading the administration and the media to tout the day "not distant when it will be possible to land men on the moon." On August 3, there were serious racial riots in New Jersey, and on the fourth, the bodies of three young civil-rights workers, missing since June, were found in Mississippi. There were 16,000 US troops in Vietnam and the administration was talking of sending 5,000 more. Then on August 5, the day the Simbas stormed the Consulate in Stanleyville, the *New York Times* carried the headline: "US Planes Attack North Vietnam Bases; President Orders Limited Retaliation after Communist PT Boats Renew Raids."

With that President Johnson went after his Tonkin Gulf Resolution in the Congress, with an eye cocked to the upcoming Presidential elections, and he wanted no distractions—certainly not in the middle of Black Africa. On August 4, as Hoyt was trying to evacuate his family, staff, and any other Americans he could find, McGeorge Bundy, the President's National Security Advisor, was assured in an inner-staff memorandum (which probably got into the Oval Office), that State Department press briefings would play the situation in the Congo "low key," and that they would attempt to keep "tomorrow's stories from being too wild."<sup>7</sup> The story carried the next day on page 7 of the *New York Times*, with byline Washington, reported that: "Officials here gloomily watched the deterioration of the situation in the Congo today without much idea of what to do about it." It was, however, becoming apparent to the President and his inner circle of advisors that this "deterioration" would require special management.

The official selected by the President and told to "pay particular attention to Africa" was Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs W. Averell Harriman<sup>8</sup>—known affectionately to some as "The Old Warhorse" and to some others, perhaps not so affectionately, as "The Crocodile."<sup>9</sup> To most Washington officials dealing with the Congo there was no doubt that the Governor, as he preferred to be called, had received his charter directly from the President. Nor was there any doubt in the coming weeks that he had a direct line to the President, informally bypassing his immediate superiors in the Department of State, Secretary Dean Rusk and Under Secretary George Ball.

Harriman, in effect, at least in the beginning, was the executor of the crisis and this, rather curiously, put him over the head of G. Mennen Williams, who with 3 years' experience as Assistant Secretary for Africa, one would have expected to be the logical manager for overseeing a crisis in Africa. But Williams, who also preferred to be called "Governor,"<sup>10</sup> was a "real Kennedy man" and somewhat out of favor with "Johnson's people." He was also on the 6th floor of the Department and the President wanted somebody on the 7th—the top floor in the crisis-managing hierarchy. Most of all, Johnson wanted a loyal and trusted Party man, one who knew how to avoid letting a crisis get out of hand during an election year. Thus it was, at least in the beginning, that politics would be the governing issue in determining future courses of action.

As "The Old Warhorse," however, Harriman had had a long list of experiences and contacts that particularly qualified him for the job he was undertaking.<sup>11</sup> Of special significance for the purposes of this study is that he was a long-time associate and close friend of Belgium's Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister, Paul-Henri Spaak. So it was, on the day following receipt in Washington of Hoyt's flash message after his emergence from the Consulate vault, that Harriman was off to Brussels. After all, the Belgians had more at stake in the Congo than the United States, and hopefully, Harriman would be able to elicit some strong action.

The Belgian Government, however, had had no disquieting news of an attack on their Consulate in Stanleyville. Like the administration in Washington, it too was facing upcoming elections—remembering well the turbulence that had arisen over Lumumba's murder, Katanga's secession, and all the other intrigues

in the Congo that had backed the previous government domestically and internationally to the wall a couple of years before. Having elicited the views of a long list of experienced Congo experts in both the public and private sectors, Spaak and US Ambassador Douglas MacArthur II were ready to brief Harriman on what the Belgians were prepared to do—and not do.

Spaak told Harriman that the Belgian business community "to a man" was opposed to any military intervention. It was assumed that Gbenye and his *Conseil National de Libération* (CNL) were behind Olenga. The Belgians had previously done business with Gbenye; he was no fool and certainly realized that any new order established by his CNL or Olenga's army would continue to need Belgian technical assistance. Moreover, there was little demand for action from Parliament, the press, or the Belgian public. They too were tired of the "Congo Problem" and matters would eventually work themselves out. Harriman's hope that Spaak would agree either to send Belgian troops, or to use Belgian officers then in the Congo to encadre the ANC and bolster its wobbly chain of command, met with immediate rejection—for fear of reviving old antagonisms over mercenaries and of rekindling racial hatred that would spread to the 4 to 5 thousand Belgians in rebel-held areas.<sup>12</sup> In sum, Harriman found that the Foreign Minister was also anxious to play the situation low key and keep the stories from becoming too wild.

Spaak did, however, agree to act in one area. He told Harriman and MacArthur that the Belgians would add another 50 officers and non-commissioned officers to the 100 already in the Congo training Congolese combat units, and add another 100 to the 150 men already engaged in technical training. In short, they would strengthen their current assistance program, but again Belgian troops would not be doing any fighting. Harriman for his part promised to increase the US supply of transport and communication equipment to the Congo and to provide full moral, diplomatic, and political support behind "any effective measure to avert catastrophe."<sup>13</sup> He would have to stand behind this promise within the next few days. Catastrophe was brewing in Leopoldville.

Harriman returned to Washington on August 8 and, according to the press release, reported on his "fruitful talks" in Brussels. On the ninth, the President held a news conference at the Ranch. Reporters asked ten questions—about Southeast Asia, Cyprus, and

other world and domestic items of interest—but not one question was asked about the Congo. On the eleventh, Harriman and CIA Director John McCone briefed the 539th meeting of the National Security Council, and on the twelfth, Harriman discussed increased US aid programs for the Congo in a closed session of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa. Nothing appeared in the press about any consideration being given to gain the release of the American officials in Stanleyville, nor was there any mention of an Operation FLAGPOLE.

Meanwhile, an ad hoc task force of the State Department's Africa Bureau was being formed in a room next to the Operations Center on the Department's 7th floor. Walker Diamanti, one of the first tabbed for duty soon after Hoyt's FLASH message of the attack on the Consulate, remembers that one of his first tasks was to find large wall maps of the Congo and Stanleyville, together with an assortment of colored pins to distinguish all the players. William Schaufele was the most current Congo expert, having opened the consular office in Bukavu and having just come from the Bureau's Congo Desk. Lewis Hoffacker had recently been the Consul in Elizabethville and was assigned to the group. Henry Tasca, Governor Williams' assistant, was the chief coordinator. The group's contact in the White House, in the Executive Office of the President and reporting directly to McGeorge Bundy, was William H. Brubeck, a Kennedy-appointed holdover.

All settled down to a 24-hour routine, realizing that Harriman, not Williams, was calling the shots. Initially there was no panic and little sense of crisis—at least with regard to Hoyt and the other Americans. The feeling of these "Old Africa Hands" was that the history of Africa called for patience. We had, after all, built up a reservoir of good will in Africa and the United Nations as a result of our Congo policy of the previous 4 years. In the traditional African way there would soon be a palaver under a big tree, with lots of pombi to drink—to settle everything.

Nor was there a sense of urgency about the Congo at the time in the Pentagon where, while there were not many Old Africa Hands, there were nevertheless plenty of overworked contingency planners. Under President Kennedy, the Pentagon had been filled with crisis managers—young academics and "Whiz Kids" who had never before had a world crisis to manage. As the saying of the day went: "If there hasn't been a crisis in the morning, Kennedy will invent one to get you through the day."

Every crisis in the Pentagon had to have its full gamut of contingency plans. The Pentagon under President Johnson was just becoming disengaged from the dozens of Cuban plans thrashing about and was being redirected gradually to Vietnam, when on 2 August 1964, 3 days before the Simbas took Stanleyville, the Tonkin Gulf crisis hit with the attack on the USS *Maddox*. A week later Turkish planes attacked Cyprus and the Pentagon's crisis watchers and contingency planners were running doubletime again. Action officers were, of course, following the Congo situation and Operation FLAGPOLE, but at the level of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, it is doubtful that there was time for much more than an occasional 5-minute briefing. There was too much going on of more critical importance—too many plans to be kept updated and ready.

At this time in the Pentagon there was another factor working against rescuing Hoyt and his staff, which can best be described as a bias against Africa in general, and against the Congo in particular. Like the Belgians, Pentagon planners and action officers were tired of the Congo and its indigestible affairs. Who could really care about one side or the other in the Congo? No one really knew what either side stood for, and certainly the reputation of the Leopoldville government was not one to inspire an immediate call for support.

This feeling possibly also had racial overtones as the Armed Forces in the mid-1960's became increasingly involved in riot control—planned in the Pentagon almost exclusively by white officers. Anything US troops did in the rebel-held Congo while rescuing Americans would probably result in killing blacks, and that might aggravate the US domestic black problem even further. And what about black soldiers in the Armed Forces, called upon to kill blacks to rescue whites?

Nor was it easy in the Pentagon to see how any outcome in the Congo one way or the other would influence the situation militarily vis-a-vis the Russians or Chinese. There was a feeling that these were diplomatic games played by the State Department, which too often overly represented the United States in isolated and faraway places of little political-military importance. The creation of the International Security Agency in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (OASD/ISA) had cut the direct link of the Armed Forces staffs with State Department action officers. OASD/ISA, composed for the most part of civilians, now

coordinated the Defense Department with the State Department in international affairs. Thus the Armed Forces staffs felt remote and short-circuited as participants in any international crisis, especially during its early stages. As one very senior Army officer put it, the service staffs felt basic contempt or "at least lack of respect" for situations in which diplomats (civilians) often found themselves. They got themselves into it; let them get themselves out.

Thus, between Washington and Brussels, with the remoteness of Stanleyville and the exigency of events elsewhere, there was little effort made, at least within the official hierarchy, to push the President's hand in the Congo. On August 12, he spoke to the American Bar Association "... in the midst of a troubled week in a turbulent world," and never once mentioned the Congo.<sup>14</sup>

### **General Olenga and the T-28s**

After the attack on the Consulate, the first few days thereafter passed relatively quietly for Hoyt and his staff, confined in the Consulate and the adjoining residence. The Simbas were busy mopping up scattered groups of the *Armée Nationale Congolaise* (ANC) and celebrating as victorious armies do. There was news that General Olenga had arrived the evening of August 6, and members of the rest of the diplomatic corps and business community, who had more freedom of the city than the Americans felt they enjoyed, attempted to arrange a meeting to gain Olenga's cooperation in matters of security for themselves and in the resumption of normal activities.

Finally on the afternoon of the tenth, the "Lord of the Popular Army" met with the assembled foreign community. Wearing the three stars of a lieutenant-general and a confiscated dress sword, Olenga presented an imposing figure—fully 6 feet tall and slender, about 25, with mustache and goatee. He was a Batetela which, together with another warrior tribe, the Bakusu, formed the backbone of the rebel army.

Following primary school, his only education, Olenga had been a messenger and handyman for the railroad office in Kindu. Under the secessionist Gizenga government in Stanleyville in 1961, he was appointed provincial Director of Public Works. Although untrained in military matters this shortcoming was leavened by a native shrewdness and primitive sense of justice, which he often

violently displayed. There was a report that he had traveled to China. That he hated the United States became obvious at this first meeting as he raved about the "thousands" of American soldiers fighting in the Congo; then he announced that because of this the American consular staff must be expelled—*personae non gratae* (PNG).

The next morning, the eleventh, Hoyt sent a commercial telegram to Ambassador Godley telling of Olenga's PNG order but advising against any "special transportation arrangements," the between-the-lines implication being (having met Olenga) that this would be too dangerous.<sup>15</sup> This was the last contact the Embassy would have with Hoyt for 10 days. Communicator Ernest Houle, holed up in his apartment for the past 6 days, now joined the others in the Consulate, and that afternoon all five would feel Olenga's wrath against Americans. By now it was certainly too late for any further consideration of Operation FLAGPOLE.

*A group of Simbas appeared [August 11] and announced their intentions of searching the Consulate. They did so and found the locked door of the vault. A major arrived in a car accompanied by a platoon in a truck and immediately began pushing us around and beating us. The Major said that the vault must be opened at all costs and selected Consul Hoyt to perform the task. During the period Hoyt was attempting to open the vault door the other members of the Consulate staff were chased about the inside of the building by armed soldiers and beaten with rifle butts and the flat side of bayonets, frequently drawing blood. Simbas discovered the American flags outside the Consulate and made us chew the flags as if to eat them. During this time Consul Hoyt was also hit on the head with a rifle butt and also had his hand injured when a Simba stamped on it. Major Nasor then announced that we were to be taken to the Lamemba [sic] monument and killed. All five of us were then pushed and shoved onto the truck—incidentally an AID truck. The flags were then yanked from our mouths and replaced by dried fish heads which were scattered about the bottom of the truck. Instead of being taken to the Lamemba [sic] monument we were driven to Camp Ketele. We were then made to take off our shoes and socks, and to more beatings, were forced to dance about*

Olenga's claim of fighting against thousands of Americans was of course an exaggeration, but there was certainly foundation

for his fears. United States support in 1960 of the UN force has been mentioned. A year or so later Congo worriers in Washington were already beginning to be concerned about the vacuum that might someday be created when UN troops pulled out.

As quietly as possible, and knowing the United Nations was rapidly exhausting itself in the Congo, the United States began to encourage bilateral military assistance programs: Israel to train a para-commando battalion; Italy to provide aircraft and train pilots; and Belgium to continue providing officers and NCOs to train and advise the ANC at all echelons.<sup>16</sup> The United States had become, as Olenga well knew, not only the principal provider of equipment, but also the heart and soul behind support of the central government. In late 1963, the United States established a Military Mission to the Congo (COMISH), and in February 1964, feeling that time was running out in the Congo, the President approved sending three mobile training teams.<sup>17</sup>

The real bane to Olenga's army, however, which will figure more and more prominently as this story unfolds, was the US supply of six T-28 aircraft—single-engine trainers, top speed only 250 mph, but with a tremendous capability for devastating ground columns rolling down what few roads there were in the eastern Congo. Two months before the fall of Stanleyville, in fighting around Albertville (Kalemi) and Uvira, T-28s had clobbered Simba columns advancing down the roads. On 16 June 1964, the same day a *New York Times* article reported that American civilian pilots had made "repeated sorties over the [Ruzizi River] valley, shooting up anything that moved in the road," a State Department spokesman stated that American pilots were in fact flying supply missions, but were not involved in combat.<sup>18</sup>

A few days later, following the repercussions, officials acknowledged that the Government was "now informed" differently. There were "some American civilian pilots under contract with the Congolese Government" who had flown T-28 sorties, but they would no longer be so involved.<sup>19</sup> It soon became generally known among Congo-watchers that the Americans had been "replaced" by exiled Cubans—recruited in Miami by, and under contract to, the CIA.<sup>20</sup> But to Olenga where was the distinction? They were all Americans to him—"thousands" of them—on the ground and in the air.

## Joint Task Force LEO

In Leopoldville, as was mentioned before, catastrophe was brewing. Concern of embassy personnel was mounting, not just for Hoyt and his staff, but also for themselves. The rapidity of the rebel advance in all directions, as Ambassador Godley cabled Washington on August 10, had created a sense of "defeatism, pessimism, and growing fatalism." Refugees were arriving with horror stories and examples of the frightening ineptitude of the ANC to stem the rebel advance. Congolese as well as Europeans were sending their wives and children to Europe for "school registration." Rebel supporters were working within the city and it was felt that the central government could evaporate overnight.

Godley thought it was time to consider unilateral action. He suggested quick dispatch of one "non-African battalion" to hold the city, and he reported that "only dramatic action" could stem the tide.<sup>21</sup> At 7:15 that night, William Brubeck, the White House liaison to the State Department ad hoc Congo task force, forwarded Godley's cable to Bundy with a note that he had requested Harriman's evaluation and recommendations the following morning. Harriman in the meantime had alerted the Pentagon and been briefed on military plans.

Back in January, when Pierre Mulele was starting to create havoc in Kwilu Province and the United Nations was beginning to lessen its interest and commitment in Congo peacekeeping, General Paul D. Adams and his contingency planners at US Strike Command (STRICOM), MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, were becoming increasingly involved in the Congo. Adams' headquarters was responsible to the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) for about a third, and probably the most unsettled third, of the world: the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa. Mulele's rebellion had generated OPLAN 515 (READY MOVE) at STRICOM which provided a small force of men and plans called "Joint Task Force LEO" on 6-hour standby, ready to move to the Congo to evacuate Americans in case the need arose.<sup>22</sup> In February the JCS terminated the alert and the plan went into the files.

Several months later, with new revolts breaking out in the eastern Congo, General Adams had dusted off and revised the old plan—now known as OPLAN 515/1 (READY MOVE 2) and beefed up to include a platoon of airborne infantry.<sup>23</sup> On the morning of

August 11, when Harriman made his recommendations to Bundy, he called for immediate execution of the revised plan. Bundy approved and that afternoon the President gave the green light, the JCS sent execution orders to General Adams, and in a few hours JTF LEO was on its way<sup>24</sup>—to be joined in Leopoldville by three "unarmed" CH-34 helicopters with crews coming from the US Army in Europe.<sup>25</sup>

Joint Task Force LEO, with its airborne platoon, did not provide the battalion that Ambassador Godley had called for—it was, in fact, the smallest US military force committed overseas in recent times—but it did provide the "dramatic action" he had requested. Within a couple of days after its arrival at N'djili airport, 18 road miles from Leopoldville, it was the talk of the town. "Almost immediately," the people felt a new surge of confidence that perhaps Leopoldville would not become a catastrophe after all.<sup>26</sup>

In the interim, political concern was mounting in Washington, especially as news circulated about the employment of JTF LEO. On August 14, Ambassador Godley, who as Chief of Mission was responsible for all official American effort in the Congo, received the first "blast" from Washington on what he could and could not do with his military team—a harbinger of more blasts and dilemmas to come. The press was reporting that armed US paratroopers were riding "shotgun" on helicopters and supporting the ANC, and Washington was suspicious and restive of a "creeping commitment." Godley was told that paratroopers would not accompany helicopters unless JCS approved on a case-by-case basis.<sup>27</sup> To soldiers and diplomats of the tough breed of Adams and Godley, these were difficult instructions indeed, bringing to the fore the perennial problem of the use of the military in a diplomatic environment. Under just what circumstances do soldiers fight?

In General Adams' Letter of Instructions to the Commander of JTF LEO, (Colonel Robert W. Teller, US Marine Corps), he specified that the mission of the task force was to conduct rescue operations and provide such airlift support as might be required by the Ambassador. Realizing that this might call for firing a few shots in anger, he laid down some rules of fire: only minimum force would be used to accomplish the mission and, if resistance were encountered in a rescue operation, covering fire could be delivered "as may be necessary for security and protection of essential personnel and equipment."<sup>28</sup>

Now, however, with Washington's instructions to Godley, rescue helicopters could not even carry armed guards—unless it was first determined that they would be needed and approval obtained beforehand from Washington. This could present an impossible situation, like having to call the mayor's office for permission to use a fire extinguisher to put out flames on the kitchen stove. The pilot of an unarmed CH-34, flying without infantry protection aboard, might wonder how he would extricate himself and a planeload of missionaries from a sudden and unexpected charge of Simbas in the middle of Africa—on a case-by-case basis with JCS approval. This dilemma of life and limb would be tested shortly

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Following the ordeal of eating American flags and dried fish heads, life became somewhat easier for the American officials in Stanleyville

*At 2300 that evening [August 11], the new Provincial President, Mr. Kinghis, drove up to the Consulate and said that he was looking for the "big car" by which he meant that belonging to the Vice-Consul. Kinghis was told that we would be delighted to give him our large car but unfortunately it had already been taken by the Simbas.*

*During the day [August 14] we spent most of the time entertaining our new guard (Simba) and we attempted to establish cordial relations with them by offering them drinks and cigars and other small inducements. During this first day under formal house-arrest, it became clear that we would have to lay out large sums of money for beer and food to maintain our guard of 10 to 12 persons.*

### **Drumming up Support**

Governor Harriman took two other actions in addition to getting the President to approve dispatch of JTF LEO, both as a follow-on to his meeting with Spaak in Brussels.

As agreed in Brussels both Belgium and the United States would turn to "certain NATO allies" for support in stemming the rebel tide, and this most logically meant the French and British. During the Katanga secession deGaulle had supported Tshombe, opposing all UN resolutions and it was to Paris that Tshombe had

fled in exile when UN forces overthrew the secession. DeGaulle had French-speaking soldiers and vulnerable interests in the French colony next door north, in Congo Brazzaville.

The British, too, had supported Tshombe in Katanga. Next door south were their mining interests in the Copper Belt of Zambia, and the British needed the railroad (Benquela) through the Congo (and Angola) to get the ore to the sea. They had flown troops to Tanzania in January 1964 to put down army mutinies there and in Zanzibar—all of which seemed to stem from Chinese meddling, especially after Chou-en-lai, in February, had made a speech in Cairo saying that "Africa is ripe for revolution." And in May, a young Chinese diplomat had defected to the United States Embassy in Bujumbura, Burundi, claiming that China was determined to take over the Congo as a first step in a conquest of Africa.

Harriman, therefore, looked to the domino theory in guiding US Ambassadors in Paris and London in their approaches to their respective foreign ministries and in his talks with the French and British Ambassadors in Washington: rebel leaders in the Congo show knowledge of Chinese tactics in flooding towns with fifth-column peasantry preparing the way for elite combat units; Simbas are carrying Communist literature and spouting Maoist slogans; we are "now observing what can happen as [a] result [of] Communist footholds in such small and geographically isolated centers as Brazzaville, Bujumbura, and Zanzibar"; we need a sense of urgency to maintain a pro-Western Congo government.<sup>29</sup> Or the dominoes will fall throughout Africa, Harriman implied. But it was to no avail.

Times had changed since 1960. DeGaulle was in the process of scaling down French commitments in Africa, and the British had problems as a result of events brewing in Rhodesia. Both Paris and London reported their concern about the success of any policy in support of Tshombe, and they doubted Tshombe's chances of solving the Congo's internal political problems by force. What if he were to call back his Katanga mercenaries, thus transforming an intra-Congolese affair into a black-white struggle, what if the Bloc increased its support of the rebels, what if the moderate African states, who also have doubts about "Lumumba's killer," were to join with the avant-garde and trigger a wave of Africanism? What if...? As Ambassador Bohlen cabled from Paris "No concert of Europe exists."

Harriman's second action was to send Governor Williams to Leopoldville, riding in with JTF LEO on August 11, and

accompanied by William E. Lang, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Africa in OASD/ISA. At the top of the agenda was a heart-to-heart chat with the Congolese leaders. Just before leaving Washington, Williams had received an office visit by South African Ambassador Willem Naude. Naude wanted to know the US Government's reaction to Tshombe's request to Pretoria for military assistance, to include two fighter squadrons, an unspecified variety of military equipment, and "white officers and white enlisted men." Williams answered that the request was for South Africa to decide, but what miffed him was that neither Kasavubu nor Tshombe had advised the United States or the Belgians of the request.<sup>31</sup> If there was to be cooperation in crisis, they must put their cards on the table.

Meeting with Williams on August 12, Kasavubu gave the impression that he knew nothing about the South African request, "although he was somewhat evasive." Meeting later with Tshombe, Williams got "no straight answer" except that Tshombe said he would "turn to [the] devil if necessary for help."<sup>32</sup>

With the ice somewhat thawed, Williams and Lang sat down with Tshombe for several days and played quid pro quo. For the "quid" the United States agreed to increase its supply of transport and communication equipment and, in addition, to provide four or five World War II B-26K bombers—pulled out of storage, reconditioned, and "almost brand new." The Congo would have operational possession (but not title) for 60 days and could repaint the planes with Congolese markings, but, and of significance later, the United States could request their earlier return.<sup>33</sup>

Remembering the flap in June over the T-28s and their pilots, announcement of the agreement to the press was careful to weasel a few words: the planes were "long-range reconnaissance planes," which were not limited necessarily to reconnaissance; and they were to be flown by "contract pilots" who would not be US citizens.<sup>34</sup> But the "quid" ran out when Tshombe asked Williams for immediate dispatch of three US parachute battalions to retake Stanleyville. "This requirement was bluntly turned down," Harriman reported to Bundy at the White House.<sup>35</sup>

Now for the "quo." In a 5-hour conversation with Tshombe on the fifteenth, Williams hammered out Washington's view that Tshombe had to "Africanize" the military situation in the Congo and publicly seek broad African assistance. Williams had in hand Dean

Rusk's personal guidance: the "key to [the] Congo impasse" is a request to African countries for support, without which US assistance "becomes complicated"; for our collaboration to be "fruitful" there must be more evidence of realism and cooperation with Africa. Then for a little splash of Cold War rhetoric, Williams was to tell Tshombe that the Congo must create the image of a government struggling to maintain unity and independence "in the face of external attempts at subversion."<sup>36</sup> This, Tshombe was told, would make the United States seem part of a broad and approved military effort, would guarantee African opinion behind Tshombe's efforts, and would dilute conspicuous US intervention. Otherwise, adverse reaction in the United States and the United Nations might prevent the United States from later giving the kind of aid the Congo would like.

This was a tough "quo" to get from Tshombe. It was almost as if Washington had forgotten all about the Katanga secession. Williams, in carrying out his instructions, had to tell Tshombe, the man who had been overthrown by foreign troops, many of them coming from Africa, to go out now and invite them back in. African troops were not popular anywhere in the Congo—after 4 years of UN police action—and such an invitation could rebound against any Congolese leader extending it. Did Washington remember Africa's hatred of Tshombe for his use of mercenaries—a hatred that facilitated the United States getting African votes behind Congo resolutions? Had Washington forgotten that only a month before in Cairo Tshombe had not even been allowed to sit at the OAU Summit table? And besides, was Tshombe to admit to his own military that other African troops were better than his own, if in fact they were?

Governor Williams left without agreement on the "quo," leaving Ambassador Godley to put on the pressure. Finally, on August 16, Tshombe told the Ambassador to relay to Williams that the Congolese Government would request support from certain African countries, as Williams had requested. Tshombe then wrote to Tubman, Senghor, Tsiranana, and Selassie asking for military assistance that he knew he would never get.<sup>38</sup> A week later Godley would report that neither Kasavubu nor Tshombe had followed up on the letters, and that he was convinced they would not. Tshombe had sent the letters "only because he was pushed so hard by Governor Williams and because he thought this [was the] only way [to] insure continuing US support."<sup>39</sup> Apparently Washington was

satisfied, because Tshombe got his B-26s. In the meantime there had been no further contact with Hoyt.

*In the afternoon [August 16] Dr. Barlovatz again visited the Consulate in order to check on our health. The Doctor described the ritual murders and blood sacrifices which were going on in front of the Lamemba [sic] monument. He said that most intellectuals, all members of the previous administration who held important posts, captured ANC officers, and other important individuals were being cut down in large numbers. Barlovatz described the dismemberment and eating of the liver of the former PNP President in the area. . . . Barlovatz claimed that six Europeans have died as a direct result of the Popular Army invasion . . . that conditions at the hospital were desperate, and that the witch doctors were interfering with the care of the wounded.<sup>40</sup>*

## **Bukavu**

Three hundred miles southeast of Stanleyville lies one of the best kept of Belgian colonial secrets—the fantastically beautiful city of Bukavu (see Map 2). Lying at the southern tip of Lake Kivu, one of the string of mountain-surrounded lakes stretching along the Central African Rift, Bukavu as a resort paradise had about everything—mountain-fresh climate, water sports, lush tropical greenery—truly a Swiss-like setting along the sunny Equator, a St. Moritz without snow. And the Belgians laid it out to take maximum advantage of the setting: four peninsulas extending into the lake, each lined with waterfront villas, while perpendicular across the head of each peninsula ran the main thoroughfare lined with shops featuring Dior dresses from Paris, endive from Brussels, and Edam cheeses from Amsterdam.

By one of those quirks of colonial history, which is pertinent to this story, the Belgians, long before the winds of change ever threatened to sweep across Africa, had built Kamembe airfield just outside Bukavu. It had seemed unimportant at the time that Kamembe was also located across the border in Ruanda-Urundi, its contiguous colony. Then came independence, so by August 1964, the airport built to service Bukavu was now located across an international frontier in the newly independent Republic of Rwanda.

Also of significance to this study is that Rwanda happened at this time to be a blood enemy of its former sister colony to the south, the newly independent Kingdom of Burundi. It was Adlai Stevenson, United States Ambassador to the United Nations, who said a couple of days before their independence on 1 July 1962: "First of all, I find very few people who even know where Ruandi-Urundi is or what it is."<sup>41</sup> But the where and what of these two tiny former Belgian colonial appendages to the Congo were important in August 1964.

Demographically, both are composed of basically two races in the same ratio: roughly 85 percent Hutu of Bantu origin, and 14 percent Tutsi of Nilotic stock. Prior to independence the histories of both colonies were practically identical. For four to five centuries the tall Tutsis, as the warrior group, ruled over the short Hutus. There was a king, or *mwami*, in each colony. But in the movements to independence, the Tutsis in Burundi held on to power, brutally eliminating all simmerings of Hutu unrest, while in Rwanda, after a particularly bloody and vengeful revolt, the *mwami* and about 140,000 of his loyal followers fled for their lives in all directions across the frontiers—to include the eastern Congo and into the mountains north and west of Bukavu.

It was to this group, warrior-caste Tutsis in exile, that Communist China turned to help fulfill Chou-en-lai's "ripe for revolution" vision. That this put the Chinese on the side of feudal nobility—decadent, ineffectual monarchs and racial hierarchies representing only a minority of the populations in Rwanda and Burundi—that this threw them against the majority Hutu, about as classless a society of farmer proletariat as could exist—well so much for ideology.

The Chinese opened a big Embassy in Bujumbura, the reigning Tutsi king's capital, and started their meddlings. On 17 August 1964, two UN officials, one French and one Italian, were hacked and stoned to death by Rwandan Tutsi refugees northwest of Bukavu.<sup>42</sup> Viewed from the Chinese Embassy in Bujumbura, Rwanda and the eastern Congo were both "ripe." The key was Bukavu with the airport across the Rwandan border at Kamembe—1200 feet of asphalt runway and just long enough to accommodate the C-130 aircraft of Joint Task Force LEO.

Two weeks earlier back in Washington, Lieutenant Colonel Donald V. Rattan, freshly graduated from the Army War College, reported into the Pentagon for what he thought was going to be a comfortable assignment. Three days later, on August 6, and the day after the fall of Stanleyville, his Pentagon assignment was changed and he was told he would leave for the Congo the next day. On the eleventh he was in Bukavu, enjoying the lake and mountain scenery, cool summer evenings, and hearing rather unsettling reports about Simbas, Tutsis, *dawa*, Olenga, and other terms and names about which he had heard little to nothing a week before.<sup>43</sup>

In Bukavu, Rattan was to assist Colonel William A. Dodds, who by this time could qualify as an Old Congo Hand. Dodds had been in the Congo since the previous February as US Strike Command's Senior Representative in Leopoldville (SENREPLEO), officially to serve as military adviser to the Prime Minister and unofficially to be General Adams' eyes and ears in assessing what was going on in the Congo. On the morning of August 19, Dodds packed his bags to catch an afternoon plane to Leopoldville, enroute to the United States, and processing for mandatory retirement on the thirty-first. But first, as SENREPLEO, he decided to take a last look at the ANC outpost guarding Bukavu from the southwest. So off he went, accompanied by Rattan, Lewis R. MacFarlane, a young Foreign Service officer from the Consulate, and an ANC liaison officer. Dodds missed his afternoon plane.

Early that afternoon of the nineteenth, Simba troops burst into the main thoroughfare of Bukavu, helping themselves to the European imports in the shops. The ANC retreated down the four peninsulas with the lakefront villas and Washington began to receive the horrible news: Dodds and party had gone out to inspect the front lines and have "not been heard from since; Consulate has been evacuated to Kamembe; send C-130s to Kamembe immediately with reinforcements and supplies; MacFarlane's passport and papers, covered with blood, were found in a truck in which a rebel officer had been killed; . . . odds are heavily against them and it [is] probable they were killed or captured."<sup>44</sup> With that it was time to test General Adams' Rules of Fire on rescue operations, recalling the flap of only 5 days before in Leopoldville when paratroopers in JTF LEO had been caught riding "shotgun" on helicopters.

Receiving the news from Bukavu, General Adams sent out two quick telegrams. The first went to the Commander of JTF LEO

telling him to use all available aircraft "with priority over all other missions" to rescue Dodds and his party.<sup>45</sup> The second went to the Joint Chiefs ("Personal for Wheeler" from Adams") requesting authority to use "whatever force available in the Congo that is required to rescue these officers," to include the troops and CH-34s of JTF LEO.<sup>46</sup> Obviously this would require review above the level of the JCS and the Africa Bureau's ad hoc task force.

While awaiting the review of Adams' request, the JCS halted any use of force by JTF LEO and the Department cabled Ambassador Godley for his recommendations on how to accomplish a "non-violent rescue" of the Dodds party.<sup>47</sup> The answer received by Washington the next morning (the twentieth) showed frustration in the embassy: if Washington is "serious" about rescuing Dodds, force is needed; negotiations are impossible.<sup>48</sup> And a little later we can understand why you (Department of State) and JCS might have fear of "too gung-ho attitude here," but we "hope our hands will not be tied."<sup>49</sup> They were.

Unknown to the Ambassador, behind the blast he had received on the fourth about "shotguns" in helicopters, was the congressional support building behind Senator John Stennis' "serious and fundamental questions" about the administration's intentions in the Congo. Coming so soon after Tonkin Gulf and so soon before elections, Senator Stennis' concern dashed any hope Godley and Adams may have had about Washington untying their hands. The Senator stated: "Today we are providing transport service. I cannot but wonder if the next step will be the function of 'advising' and 'training' . . . in the style of South Vietnam so that ultimately our men will be fighting and dying in combat."<sup>50</sup> And now a few days later, it appeared as if the Dodds party had been caught doing exactly that—advising, training, fighting, and dying.

The Ambassador got Washington's answer: It was alright to use US helicopters and planes to search for Dodds and they need not be "de-armed," but any use of force to effect rescue "is not authorized without *advance* clearance in Washington."<sup>51</sup> It was a repeat of Washington's previous instructions after the arrival of JTF LEO: US troops would do no fighting (i.e., no force used) without Washington's *prior* approval "on a case by case basis."

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<sup>45</sup>General Earle G. Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Perhaps to smooth over some ruffled feelings, Secretary Rusk then drafted his own message to Godley, which showed his frustrations at the time and laid the groundwork for the thinking that would govern the days ahead: we do not intend to be drawn step by step into using our military personnel against the rebels "while other African nations and all of Western Europe are sitting on their hands."<sup>52</sup> In short, in Bukavu as in Stanleyville and Leopoldville there would be no Operation FLAGPOLE and no paratroopers riding shotgun.

One African nation was not sitting on its hands—the Hutu Republic of Rwanda. With the Simbas on the nineteenth came the refugee Rwandan Tutsis, no doubt encouraged by the Chinese to continue the attack all the way to the Rwandan capital at Kigali to restore their *mwami* on his lost throne. Realizing the Tutsi threat, the Rwandan Government opened Kamembe airport and the frontier, and allowed JTF LEO, T-28s, and several hundred of Tshombe's old Katanga gendarmerie to fly in.

The battle raged for about a day, while C-130s poured in and out of Kamembe. For the first time ANC troops, watching the big planes come and go, felt they were not going to be abandoned—so they fought, held, and pushed the Simbas and Tutsis back out of town.<sup>53</sup> On the twenty-second, after 3 days of wandering in the mountains, Dodds and his party returned to Bukavu—amazed and delighted to find it still in friendly hands. Dodds would make his retirement ceremony on time after all.<sup>54</sup>

### **Lives in Jeopardy?**

Unfortunately, the happy ending in Bukavu foretold further hard times for the Americans in Stanleyville, for it was Olenga who had lost the battle and suffered his first military defeat, had seen American C-130s flying in and out of Kamembe, and had again felt the sting of T-28 attacks on his troops.

*It was evident [on August 20] from the news that heavy fighting was going on in the area of Bukavu and we speculated that if General Olenga failed to take Bukavu, on his return to Stanleyville he would probably take some harsh measures against us . . .*

*A quiet morning and early afternoon passed [on the twenty-first] but about 1500 the Belgian Consul and Vice-*

*Consul, accompanied by a Greek doctor [Dr Hagis], arrived at the Consulate in a state of considerable agitation. The first words of the Belgian Consul were "do you have any last messages for your family." He then took out of his pocket a copy of a cable from General Olenga in Kindu. This message . . . was a long request from Olenga for international condemnation of the imperialist camp led by the Americans. The operational part of the message was at the end, wherein Olenga ordered his officers in Stanleyville to arrest all Americans immediately, including the American Consulate, and bring them to Camp Ketele where they were to be judged "without mercy" by a military court. According to the Belgian Consul this meant that we were to be executed because previous messages concerning Congolese in Stanleyville and containing the phrase "judged without mercy by a military court" always meant summary execution.*

Hoyt and Grinwis had to think quickly. Playing upon Olenga's reputation for saying things in anger or when drunk which he would later regret, and with the help of the Belgian Consul, they got the military commander in Stanleyville to delay acting on Olenga's order until a telegram could be sent and an answer received requesting President Johnson to "reconsider" American military aid to Tshombe. A commercial telegram, dated August 21 and signed Hoyt, was sent to the Embassy in Leopoldville and immediately relayed to Washington.

The telegram was the first news from Hoyt in 10 days, though it could not of course be ascertained whether he had composed it himself, or was even alive. The final sentence was most ominous: "The continuation of American military assistance would without any doubt whatsoever jeopardize immediately, I repeat, immediately, the lives of the Americans living in the territory controlled by the People's Army of Liberation." Then the Ambassador, first listing 21 Americans in or close to Stanleyville in addition to the five consular officials, added his own thoughts to Hoyt's message: the threat against American lives "should be taken seriously. . . . Obvious whatever we do [we] must act quickly and decisively."

To this point, Washington knew little of the beatings, threats, and tribulations Hoyt and his staff had been experiencing in Stanleyville. Hoyt had advised that he was "PNG" and it was obvious he did not have freedom of communication, but the emphasis in

Washington, at least after he had called off Operation FLAGPOLE was not on the need to rescue Americans, but the political imperative to prevent further collapse of an important African country to "external attempts at subversion." But Hoyt's message and the Ambassador's dire recommendations began to stir uneasy doubts. However, official policy still called for keeping the lid on and for playing the situation low key, so Hoyt's message telling of American lives being in jeopardy was never released to the public.

Hoyt's message did indicate, however, that the handling of events in the Congo had to be upgraded a notch in crisis handling procedure; events were fast exceeding the capabilities of the little ad hoc task force. There was need to tighten command and control, to expand production to better serve the needs of Harriman—and in turn Ball, Rusk, and Bundy—and to bring in other players.

Accordingly, in an August 29 directive, Secretary Rusk formalized the Congo Working Group (CWG) at the Department level to conduct relations with, planning for, and programs in the Congo. He requested the Secretary of Defense, the Administrator of the Agency for International Development (AID), the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and the Director of the US Information Agency (USIA) to nominate individuals who would be expected "to give priority to their obligation as members of the task force and as agents for the execution of approved decisions." Rusk's directive listed only two members by name: William H. Brubeck as the White House representative; and Ambassador Joseph Palmer II as the Chief. The crisis team was firming up, though the nature of the crisis was not yet clear.

Meanwhile, Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield was adding his influential voice to that of Senator Stennis. Mansfield talked about "entanglement" and being drawn into "internecine warfare." He warned against "pitfalls for the unwary outsider." The Congolese, he said, should be told to solve their problems themselves, or at least the Belgians should be told to face up to their responsibilities.<sup>57</sup>

In an August 21 editorial, its second editorial on the Congo in 8 days, the *New York Times* hit squarely the issue that would plague US political and diplomatic efforts for the next 2 months. Here we were imposing a leader, Tshombe, who only a few years before we were pushing to depose. The more we supported him, the more he

appeared, as he had in Katanga, to be the tool of Western imperialism. In short if the Congolese central government was to be supported, which meant supporting Tshombe, then US political objectives having any hope of success must be based on what this man could or would do. Unfortunately for US political and diplomatic efforts, Tshombe at this moment, as he told Governor Williams he would do if necessary, was turning to the devil for help. Tshombe was recruiting mercenaries.

### **The "Wild Geese" and Van de Waele**

While Governor Williams was having his heart-to-heart and quid pro quo chats with Kasavubu and Tshombe, Major Mike Hoare—an Irishman by birth, ex-British Army, ex-guerrilla fighter in Malaysia, ex-mercenary in Katanga, and currently resident in Durban—was waiting in Leopoldville to meet Tshombe on the matter of re-employment. Hoare had been suggested by his friend, Gerry Puren, Tshombe's air force commander in Katanga, as the man to organize and lead mercenaries waiting in Europe and Africa for Tshombe's commission on contracting for their services.

That these "mercs" would come mostly from South Africa and Rhodesia was no particular choice of Tshombe. Puren was a South African and as Tshombe's chief recruiter he had simply passed the word first to his friends. Hoare got the job and in a directive signed by Major General Joseph Mobutu, Commander-in-Chief of the ANC, he was told to organize a thousand mercenaries and start retaking rebel-held cities, including Stanleyville, *immédiatement*. The main training base and staging area would be at Kamina, deep in Tshombe's Katanga.<sup>58</sup> Hoare and Puren acted fast. The first contingent of 40 mercenaries flew from Johannesburg to Kamina on August 22.

Simultaneously in Leopoldville, another professional soldier was hard at work—Colonel Frederick Van de Waele.<sup>59</sup> The Colonel had recently arrived from Brussels and had been sent by Spaak to be Tshombe's military advisor. Spaak knew his man and Van de Waele knew the Congo: ex-security chief in Leopoldville; military advisor in the Belgian Consulate in Elizabethville during Katanga's secession; and, as a member there of Tshombe's personally selected "Inner Committee," known as "The Richelieu of Katanga."<sup>60</sup>

Van de Waele would be in overall command of the operations envisioned in Mobutu's directive, and on August 13 during his visit to Leopoldville, Governor Williams got a briefing on what was to become the Van de Waele Plan: four columns advancing on Stanleyville from four different axes, each column supported by T-28s, with the main column pushing directly from the south. Williams in reporting the meeting to Washington did not mention the heart of the plan, if in fact he was told: the lead element and shock action force of each column would be a commando unit of mercenaries."

Before the Van de Waele Plan could be launched, however, and as a follow-on to the success at Bukavu, an attempt had to be made to retake Uvira and Albertville, where 2 months before the press had embarrassed the State Department into admitting that US civilian pilots, employed by the CIA, were in fact flying combat sorties. The two cities, 200 miles apart, were the eastern terminals of the rebels' surface contact with the outside world—across Lake Tanganyika to Tanzania and the railroad hub at Ujiji, where long before, Stanley found Livingston and first put the Congo in news headlines (see Map 2).

The first objective was Albertville. T-28s softened the target, also hitting Uvira on their way to and from their base at Kamembe. Then on August 30, Mike Hoare and a hastily put together commando unit blasted their way into Albertville—shooting at everything that moved. Hoare had nicknamed his men the "Wild Geese," the name given the thousands of Irish mercenaries who had fought in foreign armies in the eighteenth century. To the Simbas, however, finding that their *dawa* was not turning mercenary bullets to water, Hoare's men became *Les Affreux* (The Horrible Ones).

With the recapture of Albertville, Radio Stanleyville let loose another blast to alert Washington that there might be bigger worries and decisions ahead. On August 31, missionaries reported to Ambassador Godley that they had heard the rebel radio announce that all Americans and Europeans would be held hostage until Tshombe stopped using mercenaries." This followed a message from the US Embassy at Bujumbura in Burundi: the Italian Bishop of Uvira, on behalf of six civilians, twelve priests, and nine sisters, was appealing to the United States to cease all bombings. The Bishop reported that following a bombing raid on the twenty-seventh, two hostages had been killed." The rebels then sent a message to Secretary General U Thant. General Olenga warns that he holds 500

hostages, "white men, women, and children," against any air raids by the Congolese Government; he accuses the United Nations, the International Red Cross, and the World Health Organization of an "Imperialist plot."<sup>64</sup> This did make newspaper headlines

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Back in Stanleyville, the Americans had been moved to the Sabena Guest House at the airport where they were making a most foreboding observation about their captors:

*On Tuesday in the morning [September 1] we heard rumors that an airplane had circled Stanleyville on the other side of the city. We received no confirmation of this, but we note there are very few weapons in evidence at the airport, most Simbas being armed with spears only. Simba nervousness over the possibility of air attacks is marked.*

### Endnotes

- 1 Message, Consulate Stanleyville 99 to Department of State (received 011042 August 1964)
- 2 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 0332 to Department of State (received 050644 August 1964)
- 3 There were two Mennonite teachers at the university: Gene Bergman and Jon Snyder, serving in the PAX Program for conscientious objectors in lieu of military service
- 4 "Congolese Rebels Pressing On," *New York Times* 4 August 1964, p. 1
- 5 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 0359 to Department of State (received 060307 August 1964)
- 6 The strafing aircraft were to be T-28s and the helicopter was to be flown by Americans of the US Military Mission to the Congo, which had been established in 1963
- 7 White House Memorandum, William Brubeck to McGeorge Bundy, 4 August 1964
- 8 Interview with Governor W. Averell Harriman, Washington, DC, 21 October 1977
- 9 The latter term came from Harriman's pose of feigned drowsiness or disinterest during briefings, like a crocodile sleeping with open mouth, and then SNAP, he would zero in on some point of omission or illogic, ripping the briefing officer to shreds in the process

10 Williams had been Governor of Michigan from 1946 to 1960 Harriman had been Governor of New York from 1954 to 1958

11 Harriman, in addition to having been Governor of New York, had been President Roosevelt's Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin for Lend Lease, Special Assistant to President Truman, Ambassador to Russia, Truman's Secretary of Commerce, Chief US Representative for European Economic Cooperation, American Representative to NATO, and the Director of the Mutual Security Agency

12 Message, Embassy Brussels 177 to Department of State (received 061349 August 1964)

13 Memorandum, W Averell Harriman to McGeorge Bundy, subject The Congo, dated 11 August 1964

14 *New York Times*, 13 August 1964, p 14

15 Jo Wasson Hoyt, *For the Love of Mike* (New York Random House, 1966), pp 164-165, message, Embassy Leopoldville 0458 to Department of State (received 112251 August 1964)

16 In July 1962, the United States sent a team headed by Colonel M J L Greene (USA) to the Congo to determine assistance needed to modernize and train the ANC The Greene Plan was the basis for subsequent bilateral programs Ernest W Lefever, *Crisis in the Congo* (Washington, DC Brookings Institution 1965), pp 128-130

17 McGeorge Bundy, Memorandum to Secretary of State, 20 February 1964

18 *New York Times*, 16 June 1964, p 13

19 *New York Times*, 17 June 1964, p 1, 18 June 1964, p 1

20 *New York Times*, 20 August 1964, p 2 The widely rumored CIA involvement in operations in the Congo is beyond the scope of this study and the writer has made no attempt to research and describe these alleged activities

21 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 0431 to Department of State (received 101023 August 1964)

22 Message, JCS 4573 to STRICOM (DTG 280605Z January 1964)

23 Message, STRICOM STRJ3-OD 8253 to JCS (DTG 022320Z August 1964)

24 White House Note, "BKS" to Bundy, undated, message JCS 7859 to STRICOM (DTG 112233Z August 1964)

25 Message, JCS 7848 to USCINCEUR (DTG 111655 August 1964) JTF LEO's headquarters personnel came from Hqs, US Strike Command Four C-130s came from the 464th Troop Carrier Wing, Pope AFB, NC, the rifle platoon from the 504th ABN Infantry, 82nd ABN Division, Ft Bragg, NC, and the CH-34s from the 11th Transportation Co (Lt Hel ), Nellingen, FRG Total strength of JTF LEO was about

28 officers and 98 men *JTF Leo Historical Report*, MacDill AFB, FL US Strike Command, 30 December 1965, pp 4-5

26 *JTF LEO Historical Report*, p 5

27 Message, Department of State 317 to Leopoldville (transmitted 142048 August 1964)

28 General Adams, "Letter of Instruction No 1" to COMUSJTF LEO, 11 August 1964

29 Message, Department of State 734 to Embassy Paris (transmitted 092340 August 1964)

30 Governor Harriman, Memorandum, "Compliance with NSC Action 2498 of August 11, 1964," to McGeorge Bundy, 23 October 1964 Message, Embassy Paris 1087 to Department of State (received 262021 August 1964)

31 Memorandum of Conversation, Governor Williams and Ambassador Willem C Naude, 11 August 1964

32 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 472 to Department of State (received 121134 August 1964), message, Embassy Leopoldville 540 to Department of State (received 151352 August 1964)

33 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 382 to Department of State (received 191903 August 1964)

34 *New York Times*, 18 August 1964, p 1, and 20 August 1964, p 2

35 Memorandum, Governor Harriman to McGeorge Bundy, 17 August 1964

36 Message, Department of State 249 to Embassy Leopoldville (transmitted 112301 August 1964)

37 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 543 to Department of State (received 152138 August 1964)

38. Rulers of Liberia, Senegal, Malagasy, and Ethiopia, respectively A request for assistance was later sent to Nigeria Message, Embassy Leopoldville 556 to Department of State (received 161740 August 1964)

39 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 709 to Department of State (received 231424 August 1964)

40 Dr Barlovatz was a Yugoslav and a naturalized Belgian

41 Adlai Stevenson, quoted in *Time*, 29 June 1962, p 22

42. *New York Times*, 20 August 1964, p 2

43 Major General Donald V. Rattan, "The Congo-1964—Bukavu to Stanleyville," unpublished journal, pp. 1-3

44 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 607 to Department of State (received 191119 August 1964), message, Embassy Leopoldville 606 to Department of State (received 191225 August 1964), message, Embassy Leopoldville 642 to Department of State (received 200058 August 1964)

45 Message, STRICOM STRCC 8624 to JTF LEO (transmitted 191656Z August 1964)

46 Message, STRICOM STRCC 8627 to CJCS

47 Message, Department of State 387 to Embassy Leopoldville (transmitted 192143 August 1964)

48 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 632 to Department of State (received 200903 August 1964)

49 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 631 to Department of State (received 201445 August 1964)

50 Senator John Stennis, quoted in *New York Times*, 15 August 1964, p. 23

51 Message, Department of State 392 to Embassy Leopoldville (transmitted 201150 August 1964) Emphasis by writer

52 Message, Department of State 390 to Embassy Leopoldville (transmitted 201105 August 1964)

53 A major factor in the successful defense of Bukavu was the inspiring and capable leadership of the ANC commander, Colonel Leonard Mulamba. Trained at the US Army Command and General Staff College at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, Mulamba was, like Stonewall Jackson at Manassas, a leader at the right place at the right time. After Mobutu's seizure of power in November 1965, Mulamba became prime minister. He was dismissed 11 months later.

54 The Dodds party on the morning of the nineteenth had run into a rebel column advancing on Bukavu—the ANC outpost they were checking having melted away. After a brief firefight, they abandoned their truck and fled cross-country into the mountains—moving by night and hiding by day. On the twenty-first they were detected by some local tribesmen who, luckily, turned out to be friendly and, for promise of monetary reward, guided them into Bukavu. Rattan journal. *New York Times*, 23 August 1964, p. 29.

55 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 677 to Department of State (received 211210 August 1964)

56 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 679 to Department of State (received 211333 August 1964)

57 *New York Times*, 22 August 1964, p. 1

58 Mike Hoare, *Congo Mercenary* (London Robert Hale, Ltd , 1967), p 30

59 The writer found many spellings of the Colonel's surname, in Belgian as well as American sources Van de Waelle, Van de Walle, Vanderwalle, Vandewalle, etc In this study the writer has used the spelling found in the after-action report of DRAGON ROUGE published by General Headquarters of the Belgian Armed Forces Occasionally, the abbreviation "VdW" will be used

60 Jules Gerard-Libois, *Katanga Secession* (Madison, Wisconsin University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), pp 163, 201

61 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 555 to Department of State (received 170849 August 1964)

62 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 870 to Department of State (received 010318 September 1964)

63 Message, Embassy Bujumbura 198 to Department of State (received 301600 August 1964)

64 *New York Times*, 4 September 1964, p 1

## September and October **4**

### **Soumialot and Gbenye**

While Tshombe was promoting external support and lining up his first team of Hoare and Van de Waele, the rebel leaders in Stanleyville were also looking for external support. Certainly Olenga, one-time railroad office messenger and handyman, was smart enough as a lieutenant general to realize that his Simbas guarding the airport needed to be armed with more than spears. Perhaps, too, he realized that to get such hardware he needed to establish a legitimate political base that could attract international recognition as had Gizenga's short-lived regime in Stanleyville 3 years before. Two candidates anxious to exploit Olenga's success, and holding credentials promising something for the future, were waiting in the wings. The first to arrive in Stanleyville, on August 28, was Gaston Emile Soumialot.

On August 6, the day after Olenga's troops had tried to break down the vault door to the Consulate, Radio Leopoldville monitored a taped voice, recorded probably in Bujumbura and recognized as Soumialot's: "Uhuru, and congratulations to the liberation forces; Lumumba always asserted that a greater man would follow him; I have taken Stanleyville and I am going to take Leopoldville."

A goateed, ideological fanatic, Soumialot appeared with leopard cap and ivory-tipped swagger stick as somewhat of a

dandy, but his political credentials were slightly better than Olenga's. He had been a district commissioner in Kindu under Lumumba, Minister of Justice in Kivu Province under Gizenga, and had fled to Brazzaville in 1963, where he became Secretary General of Revolutionary Forces in Gbenye's faction of the *Conseil National de Libération* (CNL). Then in early 1964, he had launched the "Eastern Section" of the CNL that soon had all of eastern Kivu Province aflame. His most immediate *raison d'être* to the military leadership in Stanleyville was his extensive contacts with the Chinese Embassy in Bujumbura, for whatever help that might bring.

On September 4, Christophe Gbenye, the prime candidate for power, arrived to add his voice to the already mixed and vociferous voices of Stanleyville. Gbenye had been Lumumba's and later Gizenga's Minister of Interior and, as mentioned, was the founder of the CNL. A frustrated opportunist of doubtful talents, with Western tastes and children at school in Switzerland, he was usually critically in need of funds, seeking handouts throughout Europe and Africa. He had visited the United States in 1961, seemed friendly and well-impressed, and on August 24, in Brussels, he had met with Spaak, who found him a moderate and "probably not a Communist."

Thus, Gbenye had good contacts with the outside world, strong Lumumba credentials and a recognized name in Africa, and for this on September 5, the day after his arrival in Stanleyville, he was proclaimed President and Premier of the *République Populaire du Congo*. Radio Stanleyville, between proclamations on the creation of the People's Republic, repeated over and over in Lingala: "The Venerable One has arrived: the period of hunger is ended." The "Venerable One" was age 37, 5 years younger than Soumialot, who became Minister of Defense. The "hunger is ended" alluded perhaps to the Popular Army's need for modern weapons and the hope that Gbenye, as president, would provide them.

Of interest is the period of time between Olenga's capture of Stanleyville on August 5, and the arrival first of Soumialot, and then a month after the fall of Stanleyville, the arrival of Gbenye. The Congo's independence in 1960 and Lumumba's demagoguery had promised many fruits, few of which had ever materialized. In fact, inflationary prices, unemployment, a breakdown in services, and a parade of corrupt and high-living politicians were increasingly the order of the day. This was aggravated after the mutiny of the *Force*

*Publique* by the collapse of law and order, especially outside the cities where UN troops were reluctant to go.

In the Congo's multi-ethnic society, these conditions, especially in the rural areas, resulted in a return to traditionalism and atavism, which was usually tribally oriented. Such conditions also created among the youth, the *jeunesse*, a feeling of disassociation—young rebels without a cause and looking for one. Thus, the revolution in the eastern Congo, which at this point covered about half the country, was more a consequence of spreading anarchy than of organized insurrection. Therefore, before any ambitious politician such as Soumialot or Gbenye could arrive from the outside and hope to cash in on Olenga's military success, he would first have to sniff the tribal air, to negotiate his way in, so to speak.

A return to traditionalism in a rural African society was usually also accompanied by manifestations of witchcraft, magic, and sorcery to explain misfortune, prevent further misfortune, and provide remedies—thus the resort to *dawa*, eating the liver of the former PNP President, and witch doctors interfering with the care of wounded in the Stanleyville hospital. This was the magic of Lumumbaism: nobody really understood or remembered Lumumba's rhetoric or what he stood for; only that everything had fallen apart when he left and everything would be right when he returned.\* Thus, a tie to Lumumba, especially in the Stanleyville area, was the first prerequisite for an aspiring powerseeker in gaining tribal acceptance.

Of significance to the future course of events was that this return to traditionalism meant that once having negotiated his way in, any would-be president, minister, or general hoping to bring cohesion and centralized control over the many pockets of rebellious activity in the eastern Congo had to continue negotiating, testing the tribal air, and sustaining his magic and "Lumumbaism"—or everything would fall apart and there could be danger. In playing the diplomatic games that were to come during the next 2 months, members of the Congo Working Group would never know where power was at any given time—who had the magic.

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\*There were many who thought Lumumba had gone into hiding or would be reincarnated.

Since August 23, Hoyt and his staff had been living in relative luxury at the Sabena Guest House at the airport and had heard of the arrival of Soumialot and Gbenye. If they thought the creation of the People's Republic would bring change in their diplomatic status, they were in for a rude shock. They soon found out where the power was and it clearly was not with Gbenye, the "Venerable One "

*On Saturday [September 5], no activity until about 1645 when Rombauid, the Belgian Consul and Vice Consul, as well as the Swedish honorary Consul arrived at the Sabena Guest House with an invitation for us and other members of the Consular Corps to meet the newly arrived "Revolutionary President," Christophe Gbenye, at 1700 at the President's Palace. Our Simba guard allowed Hoyt and Grinwis to depart, but just after we arrived at the Palace where the Consular Corps was gathered General Olenga drove up and immediately ordered "the Americans" removed from the meeting and thrown in the Central Prison. We were immediately grabbed by Olenga's personal guards who hit us with their rifles and shoved us into a Land Rover, this activity took place in view of the members of the Consular Corps, who appeared stunned. We were then driven rapidly back to the airport and thrown into the ante-room of the women's toilet and locked up. We remained there for about ten minutes, during which period some of the Simba threatened us with death and said our last hours had come. We were then removed from the toilet ante-room and taken to the front of the terminal, all the while being hit with rifle butts. There we found Davis' and the three other Consulate staff members waiting in another car. General Olenga himself led us in a procession to the Central Prison.*

## **Operation GOLDEN HAWK**

General Olenga's message to U Thant announcing that he was holding 500 hostages hit the front pages on Friday, September 4. After almost a month, the public was beginning to become somewhat informed of events in the Congo, and this meant that the level of official attention to the crisis had to increase.

That same day, Governor Harriman called Deputy Secretary of Defense Cyrus Vance and asked him what the military could do to rescue the hostages—at least the Americans—using minimum force. Vance called General Wheeler and that evening, about the time most offices in Washington were closing for the weekend, the Joint Chiefs sent a message to General Adams at STRICOM in

Florida make an evaluation of the problem in extricating five officials and twenty or so missionaries, and recommend courses of action, overt and covert, "in the event a decision is made to utilize US military force to obtain their release." Adams was given about 3 1/2 days, counting the weekend.<sup>3</sup>

The next morning, Colonel Edward E. Mayer, Commanding Officer of the 7th Special Forces Group, was in the middle of a round of golf at the Fort Bragg Golf Course in North Carolina. He never finished the round, a messenger told him to meet a special plane early that afternoon at Pope Field for a flight to STRICOM Headquarters in Tampa. He complied, riding with a pilot who had also been pulled off a golf course. Arriving at MacDill Air Force Base, Mayer was driven to General Adams' office where he found the General and his intelligence officer (J-2) on their hands and knees on the floor, hunched over a city map of Stanleyville. Adams briefed Mayer and told him to come back at 9 the next morning with a concept for a covert rescue operation. "Make it good," Adams told him, "because you're going to take it in."

On Sunday morning Mayer was back with his plan: parachute several Special Forces "A" Teams at night several miles upriver from Stanleyville, float and infiltrate the teams downstream on rubber rafts to the city, land and rescue the Americans in a dawn raid, and withdraw several hundred yards to a recovery area near the Congo River for a helicopter pickup. General Adams approved the concept and told Mayer to come back the next morning with the written plan. Concurrently, Adams' operations officer (J-3) was planning an overt operation that could back up Mayer's covert force if required.

The next day, Adams had his complete package and sent it off to the JCS—19 1/2 hours ahead of his deadline.<sup>4</sup> There were a couple of hitches, which he pointed out: first and foremost, the lack of any good intelligence either about Stanleyville or about the location of the Americans therein.

Actually, Colonel Mayer was one step ahead of the crisis curve. Earlier, as a good Special Forces professional anticipating possible operations (like rescuing downed American pilots in Vietnam), he had formed what he called his "Hot 'A' Teams": volunteers undergoing specially rigorous training and prepared to undertake any operation without question. All he had to do upon returning to Fort Bragg was to give them a scenario, disguising exact details for security.

Captain Raymond E. Burrell was the leader of one such "hot" team of two officers and twelve enlisted men. He remembers that his team, together with two other identical teams, received their scenario and moved into an isolated special area, which they named "Golden Hawk Compound" after the name of their operation.

The scenario was to rescue "somebody" in a villa in a town by a river. Day after day they practiced a night-time drop, inflating rafts, paddling downriver, the "snatch," and the withdrawal. They were not to be recognized as Americans, so everything had to be done by hand signals. Foreign weapons were issued, and later they learned that they were to wear black headmasks and gloves for the actual operation. No team member could have a tattoo that might identify him, and one officer had a tattoo removed so that he could remain with his team. Team members were never officially told where the "villa" was located.

The Joint Chiefs met, reviewed General Adams' plans, and on September 12 approved a memorandum to the Secretary of Defense, which included as an enclosure a proposed memorandum to Secretary Rusk spelling out the details. They recommended a "broad course of action," with a covert force of "selected and tailored" units going in first, backed up by two airborne rifle companies and eight tactical fighter aircraft pre-positioned and ready to reinforce if required. The Joint Chiefs noted that the operation would have a reasonable chance of rescuing the hostages unharmed, *provided* their precise location could be determined prior to the operation and the covert force could gain complete surprise.

Tucked away in an annex to the plan, discussing additional details of the two courses of action, was a hawkish editorial of the

\*After the plan was finalized and scenario training had started, Colonel Mayer heard about Stanley Falls. Nobody at STRICOM had mentioned them, and nobody could tell him where the Falls were in relation to Stanleyville or whether a rubber raft could float over them. Queries of course were highly sensitive. The answer came during an arranged and seemingly innocuous conversation at a cocktail party from the wife of the Commanding General at Fort Bragg, Mrs. John W. Bowen, who as a young girl and daughter of a French diplomat had lived in Stanleyville. The Falls were *upstream* close to Stanleyville and could *not* be traversed in September. Mayer's teams were hurriedly issued muffled motors for their rafts and told to practice landing downstream from the town and paddling upriver to their objective much to their chagrin.

political advantages in mounting a military rescue operation, at least as viewed from STRICOM and the Pentagon:

The operation would show, in an area where turmoil will probably exist for many years to come, that the United States does not intend to permit its citizens, legitimately in a country, to be harassed, imprisoned, or otherwise molested.<sup>5</sup>

The GOLDEN HAWKS went on 4-hour alert, but in the Congo Working Group the plans went into the file marked "HOLD: TOO HARD." Apparently to those with a direct line to the President, whatever was taking place in Stanleyville was not yet a crisis, or at least not reason enough to send the GOLDEN HAWKS to rescue American diplomats being "harassed, imprisoned, or otherwise molested."

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The American diplomats in Stanleyville would probably not have agreed:

*On Saturday [September 12] we passed a very quiet day except later in the morning when Kasongo [a colonel in the Popular Army] entered our cell accompanied by two officers. Kasongo made us dance and sing "I like Lumumba" in French. However, on leaving, Kasongo whispered that he would "save us"*

### **Tshombe's African Brothers**

A natural follow-up to Governor Williams' success in arm-twisting Tshombe into requesting military support from "friendly" African countries would be an effort to involve all of Africa in the Congo's problems—hopefully not only to gain some real help for the Congo, but, of more immediate concern, to focus attention on Olenga's announcement that he was holding "500 hostages." The logical forum would be the Organization of African Unity (OAU), where at its Second Summit Conference only 2 months before Tshombe had been denied entry. But that conference had been held in Cairo where Nasser was in command. If a special session should be called, it would probably take place in Addis Ababa, the OAU capital, where the prestige of Haile Selassie should hold sway. Significantly, the Emperor had been one of the five leaders to whom Tshombe had written for military support following Governor Williams' visit.

There were dangers, however, in lobbying for such a session. There was the chance that many African states, sensitive to Big Power machinations, would construe such US hyperactive involvement as "Americanized Africanization"—using African states in pursuit of American interests in the Congo. There was no assurance Tshombe would be invited to a special session, would attend if invited, or would conduct himself "properly" if he did attend. With his call for mercenaries, he certainly had done little since Cairo to endear himself with Black Africa. Nevertheless, with only 2 months before elections in the United States, a diplomatic effort in the OAU seemed a better course than sending the GOLDEN HAWKS. So instructions were sent to US Embassies in Africa to encourage OAU involvement, and especially for Ambassador William Korry in Addis to enlist the Emperor's support.<sup>6</sup>

In Leopoldville, Ambassador Godley received instructions to play upon the Congo Government "to mend its African fences." He should encourage Kasavubu to appoint new or additional ministers with some stature in Africa, further, Kasavubu should be encouraged to announce national elections.<sup>7</sup> Shortly thereafter, when Emperor Haile Selassie did call for a special session of the OAU and it looked as though Tshombe, though invited, might refuse to attend, Godley received instructions to get tougher: tell Tshombe and Kasavubu that the United States regards an OAU meeting as a "vital step" in obtaining the understanding of African states, this is a good chance for Tshombe to present himself as a "genuine African statesman," and it would be "tragic" if he fails to enlist support of his "African brothers", if the Congolese Government does not support this effort, it will have damaged some "fundamental assumptions" under which the United States has been proceeding.<sup>8</sup>

As the OAU session neared, US Embassies in Africa reported discouraging estimates of where their host countries stood on the Congo problem. Since the news was now out that Tshombe's mercenaries had blasted their way into Albertville, he would be more of an outcast than ever. Some posts were reporting that the rebel Stanleyville regime might be recognized as the legitimate government of the Congo. Nkrumah in Accra was referring to Olenga's Simbas as "freedom fighters" and "nationalists" rather than as guerrillas or rebels. On the other hand, from tiny Togo came a most interesting reaction, a bit premature but predictive of later events and decisions. Said Foreign Minister Apedo-Amah as he

boarded a plane for Addis, the United States should dispatch sufficient force "immediately" to overcome the rebels and restore peace, as the United States will be "damned if it does and damned if it doesn't, it should move ahead resolutely on [a] course it considers right."<sup>9</sup>

On September 5, the day Gbenye, the "Venerable One," was being proclaimed President in Stanleyville, the foreign ministers from 34 states, including Tshombe and his 58-man delegation, were being welcomed by Emperor Haile Selassie in Africa Hall. The Emperor appealed to the ministers to find a solution for the strife-torn Congo, Africa must act now "to expunge this running sore from the African scene."<sup>10</sup>

Five days later, at 4.35 in the morning, the 3d Extraordinary Session of the OAU issued a nine-point resolution, which was approved unanimously with six abstentions, including the Congo's. There were emotional scenes throughout Africa Hall where, according to the official OAU communique, the delegates had burst forth into joyous song, singing "Victory for Africa," specially composed for the occasion by Ghana's Foreign Minister Botsio. Africa had shown the world that it could solve its own problems, the delegates proclaimed—African unity was not a sham. The press in Dar es Salaam headlined the results of the session as the "Miracle in Addis."<sup>11</sup>

The "miracle" contained the expected appeals to put all things right for all those fighting to cease hostilities; for all political parties to seek a "national reconciliation"; for all powers to cease interference and refrain from actions to further aggravate the situation or worsen relations between neighbors; and, as expected, for the Congo to expel all mercenaries. Finally, realizing no doubt that the appeals represented a considerable undertaking, the delegates added a resolution establishing a 10-nation ad hoc commission, to be headed by President Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, to help with the process.

In Washington there was a tally of the diplomatic gains and losses. Tshombe had displayed tact and moderation in Addis, and in being recognized as the Congo's delegate (i.e. had achieved legitimacy for his government (versus the People's Republic); Kenyatta was known as a moderate and a strong-man in Africa,

hence his commission might be expected to find some answers to the Congo's problems even though three members of the commission were Ghana, Guinea, and the UAR, all vociferous opponents of Tshombe, and the term "cease hostilities" was better than "cease fire" in that it seemed to pertain more to those in rebellion against a central government

On the debit side "cease interference" could cause difficulties despite the US interpretation that the United States was assisting the legitimate government of the Congo in response to its request. Tshombe was committed to getting rid of his mercenaries while not getting any African troops in return, and the formation of Kenyatta's commission seemed to derogate the Congo's sovereignty in solving its own internal problems.<sup>12</sup> Finally, there was no mention in the "miracle" of any release of the 500 hostages Olenga claimed to hold

The first indication that Washington's "Americanized Africanization" diplomacy might backfire came about a week later. On September 19, as delegations on the ad hoc commission began to arrive in Nairobi, Jomo Kenyatta, in his newfound role, sent a message to President Johnson asking him to withhold Tshombe's use of US planes for military operations while his commission was engaged in finding ways to restore peace.<sup>13</sup> Then Kenyatta held a press conference and announced that a special delegation of five of the nations on the commission would go to Washington on the twenty-fourth to ask President Johnson to withdraw all military supplies and personnel from the Congo. His cable to the President was published in Nairobi: "While the Congo is still supplied with this material of destruction, the aims we have in the Congo cannot be achieved STOP."<sup>14</sup> The fat was in the fire now, especially since three of the five nations on the delegation were Ghana, Guinea, and the UAR

The Congo Working Group quickly cabled US Ambassador William Attwood, tell Kenyatta that US assistance to the Congo was at the request of the Congolese Government in the exercise of its sovereign rights; the United States could not participate in any meeting or talks which implied the United States was improperly intervening in the Congo; the United States was deeply distressed that Kenyatta had singled out Washington for such a visit without including, for example, Peking as well, the whole procedure violated international practice by failure to consult with a nation

before publicly announcing an official visit. And furthermore, LBJ would be busy."<sup>15</sup>

President Johnson was briefed on these happenings, suddenly the Congo "distraction" was encompassing the entire African continent. Kenyatta was well meaning; he just had some bad advisors and was simply acting out of a characteristic African emotion that friendly contact with another friendly chief would solve all problems. Ambassador Attwood recommended that the President meet with the delegation: "We should show ourselves receptive and reasonable and establish dialog to water down anti-US rhetoric."<sup>16</sup> Ambassador Mahoney in Accra also recommended meeting the delegation. It was a duly constituted OAU organ and Africa's prestige, and Kenyatta's, were on the line. The President's not accepting this commission would confirm an African sentiment that the United States was completely committed to Tshombe and thereby would alienate the rest of Africa and stiffen Tshombe's resistance to any OAU solution.<sup>17</sup> Obviously the decision would have impact throughout the Third World.

There was also advice tuned more to the upcoming elections. If the President rejected the delegation, it would have little effect on US politics. The delegation was below head-of-state level, so negative publicity could be minimized. However, if the United States recognized the delegation, there would be an open fight with Kasavubu and Tshombe, and the United States might appear to be joining hands with radical Africa in abandoning them—that could create a domestic uproar. Also, if the United States got too heavily involved with the OAU, we were likely to find ourselves at odds with the Belgians and our other NATO partners, and that, too, could be a domestic problem.<sup>18</sup>

Therefore, a message went to Nairobi "For Attwood from the Secretary": "We must reiterate "in strongest terms we do not want OAU mission [to] come to Washington and you should make every effort [to] prevent it."<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately the Ambassador did not receive Rusk's instructions in time—the delegation was already on the way.

The mission arrived in Washington the afternoon of September 25, and their spokesman, Foreign Minister Murumbi from Kenya, was received quickly by Governor Williams. The

official diplomatic climate, however, was understandably cool and the delegation was given little fanfare or publicity. Finally, after 6 days, Secretary Rusk gave them a VIP luncheon on the Department's eighth floor. They then departed Washington with a face-saving communique that the United States had agreed to use its good offices with Tshombe to persuade him not to use his bombers.

There was one last episode in Tshombe's relations with his African brothers. On October 6, he went to Cairo to attend the Second Conference of Non-Aligned Nations—and his plane was not even permitted to land. The next day, arriving in Cairo by commercial carrier from Athens, Tshombe was allowed entry, but was immediately whisked off to a palatial, albeit guarded guesthouse. Several days later he was escorted to his departure plane, without ever being permitted to address any of the 55 delegations at the conference.

This was enough to trigger an editorial in the *New York Times* on October 10 on the subject of the "Non-Aligned Against Tshombe." After addressing the many alignments of the nonaligned, the editorial concluded with what Tshombe had long known: Africa would leave Tshombe no choice in reunifying his country "but to continue the employment of white mercenaries and reliance on the United States and Belgium for help." It was a timely observation, for 3 days before, while Tshombe was an unwanted and guarded guest in Cairo, his mercenary commandos were retaking Uvira, cutting off the rebel supply line from Burundi.

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Thus, after a month of continent-wide diplomatic activity, there was little to show to those who would have preferred stronger action for the return of American officials "harassed, imprisoned, and otherwise molested." In fact, in researching this activity, no instances were found where the plight of the American hostages was even an issue of discussion.

While the OAU delegation was in Washington, the *New York Times* on September 27 printed an announcement on page 4 from Radio Stanleyville that 800 Europeans were being held hostage and would not be allowed to leave "save for exceptional cases." This was

300 more hostages than Olenga had previously claimed to be holding. Interestingly, there was never any follow-up or any public hue and cry for the hostages' release. In the Congo and the United States, both Government officials and the press were continuing the policy and reporting of early August—play the situation low key and keep "tomorrow's stories from being too wild"—and the public remained largely uninformed.

Unknown to the world, however, Washington's "Americanized Africanization" initiatives may have promoted a better life for Hoyt and his staff who, on September 5, had been moved from the Sabena Guest House and thrown into the Central Prison by Olenga. On September 15, realizing that Africa was focusing on the Congo and anticipating that Kenyatta's special commission might possibly visit Stanleyville, Minister of Defense, Interior, and Information Soumialot gave orders to return the Americans to the relative luxury of the Sabena Guest House:

*Later in the morning [the fifteenth] we received a visit in our cell from Gaston Soumialot . . . Soumialot lectured us on American intervention in Congolese politics and repeated the stories previously circulated by Olenga that many American mercenaries had been captured fighting the Popular Army . . . At Soumialot's departure, however, one of the officers accompanying him said that he would "look into our cases." Soumialot also inquired about our health. . . . At about 2100 the same officer who had accompanied Soumialot arrived and announced that we were to return to house arrest. . . . On our arrival at the Sabena after being check [sic] out of the prison we found that the cottage in which we had previously lived had been sealed immediately after our departure and none of our personal possessions had been touched. All of us took advantage of our return to the Sabena to shave off our ten-day beards and take our first baths since our imprisonment.*

## **The Red Cross**

While diplomatic efforts were underway in African capitals to "Africanize" the Congo's problems, the Congo Working Group was also exploring the possibility of using the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) as a possible medium for negotiating foreigners out of Stanleyville—or at least for getting an ICRC delegation into the city to report on the conditions of Americans

there. It would not be easy. Olenga in his message to U Thant on September 3 had indicted the Red Cross, the United Nations, and the World Health Organization as having engaged in an "imperialist plot." The "plot," it was later determined, was felt by Olenga to have been largely orchestrated by the Red Cross. Prior to the retaking of Albertville on August 30 by Hoare's mercenaries ICRC officials working out of Bujumbura had negotiated the withdrawal of foreigners from the city; then T-28s had bombed the town and the Simbas suspected connivance.<sup>20</sup>

There were some hopeful aspects, however, especially if the ICRC, with its headquarters in Geneva, could be promoted as a Swiss venture. Soumialot, from many days spent in Bujumbura, knew the elderly ICRC representative there, a Swiss named Senn. Mr. Senn had a good reputation with Africans and was also known in Stanleyville. He could lead a delegation. Gbenye had his children in school in Switzerland and, like many African politicians, no doubt had other Swiss connections—or would like to have had. And certainly from his background in government he must have known something about the Geneva Convention of 1949, which Lumumba's government had signed at independence, and of its prohibitions against the taking of hostages and the inhumane treatment of civilians in wartime. Finally, even young Simbas knew that wherever they found a red cross displayed they would usually find white man's *dawa* for their malaria, bilharzia, and other common ailments.

Accordingly, a plane was filled with medicines and a staff of Swiss doctors was on call, ready to fly into Stanleyville from Bujumbura on short notice. For this to happen, they would first have to get permission to enter, which depended on a resolution of the power triangle. At this point, no one knew who had the magic in Stanleyville: Olenga, Soumialot, or Gbenye.

Finally, on September 25, significantly during the absence of Olenga at the fighting front, and also significantly on the same day that the OAU mission arrived in Washington hoping to see LBJ, the plane was cleared to enter the city. Senn was a passenger. The delegation unloaded the medicines, had long discussions with Gbenye and Soumialot, and left the next day—without additional passengers and without seeing any Americans. But through a few guarded contacts and observations they were able to piece together

a remarkably accurate picture of what was happening. On the return flight to Europe the plane landed at Bangui, Central African Republic (now Empire), the ICRC officials were debriefed by US Embassy officials there, and Washington got its first real assessment of the full extent of the problem.<sup>21</sup>

- All Americans are well, except for a missionary named Scholten, who had died in a prison at Aketi, date and cause unknown.<sup>22</sup> Americans are scattered around the city and its outskirts. Hoyt and his staff are at the Sabena Guest House. Previously they were in the Central Prison and were once seen being forced to eat the American flag. Except for the US consular personnel, foreigners can move freely about the city.
- Feeling against Americans is running "particularly high." Olenga asserts a state of war exists because Tshombe uses American-made aircraft. Gbenye vows that any US soldier falling into rebel hands will be caged and exhibited.
- There is political dissension between civilians and the army. Gbenye and Soumialot are relatively reasonable but are unable to make humanitarian decisions against the "utterly primitive and savage attitude of their followers," especially the *jeunesse* and Army, and particularly against "terrorist" Olenga. Gbenye requests that foreign governments do not insist on taking people out because of the suspicion of the population and the army that once Europeans are evacuated the Americans will then bomb. He said he must prepare public opinion.
- There is no indication of Chinese support, though they may be furnishing financial help.
- ICRC officials fear for the lives of "all foreigners and suspects" in the event of bombings. They would be in "utmost danger." Any military action to take the city would have to be so sudden and massive that key points could be secured in a quarter of an hour or run the risk of a general massacre. The position of foreigners "will deteriorate with military defeats" of the rebels.

The delegation got Gbenye to agree to allow the Red Cross to return, presumably after Gbenye had had more time to "prepare public opinion," and for the next few weeks there was a flurry of messages into Stanleyville trying to arrange the promised second visit. For weeks a plane was parked at the Bujumbura airport, marked with a huge red cross and loaded with supplies, and Senn and a second delegation stood by. The US Embassy in Geneva warned Washington and Leopoldville to keep a tight rein on press reporting and any leaks which might indicate to the rebels that the United States had close liaison with the ICRC. But it was of no use, the rebel leaders never cleared a second visit.

For Hoyt and his staff at the Sabena Guest House, the day the plane landed at Stanleyville was just another day.

*At 1120 [on September 25] the Red Cross plane landed and the authorities swarmed out to the airport. Through our window we saw the plane arrive, identified Mr. Senn in the crowd, observed the large cavalcade which went directly into town. During the rest of the day and the next morning no news came to us from any source concerning the activities of the Red Cross group and what reactions were developing among the local authorities.*

### **Joint Task Force High Beam**

While the Red Cross was unloading medicines and other supplies for the rebels in Stanleyville, General Olenga was far to the north expanding the Popular Army's control to the borders of the Central African Republic, Sudan, and Uganda. This was to be the limit of its advance.

At the same time, two of Major Mike Hoare's commandos were going into action in other sectors—the 51st Commando attacking east along the road Gemena-Lisala-Bumba 300 miles northwest of Stanleyville, and the 53d Commando attacking in all directions to expand the perimeter around Bukavu (Map 1). The pattern was always the same: Cuban-piloted T-28s and B-26s bombing and strafing in front of ground columns, Simbas either scattering in panic or being slaughtered by the more accurate and lethal firepower of the mercenaries. Even Olenga's unschooled military mind must have begun to sense onrushing catastrophe, and certainly his soldiers were beginning to suspect the impotency of their dawa. Something had to be done.

On October 1, a ham radio operator in Leopoldville, the teenage son of the Assistant Army Attaché\*, intercepted a radio transmission from the People's Army Commander in Stanleyville to the Commander-in-Chief in Paulis (Isiro) 250 miles to the northeast stating that five American planes had bombed Bumba and requesting authority to "kill all Americans who are held in the liberated zone." Ambassador Godley got Tshombe to appeal over Radio Leopoldville and the Congo Working Group rushed a cable to Ambassador Attwood to try to get Kenyatta to urge the rebels not to harm Americans. At the same time, McGeorge Bundy sent a message to the President, who was that day in Baltimore on a speaking engagement, advising him that "State [Department] will ask the press to keep the story as low key as possible."<sup>25</sup> Amazingly, the story did not appear.

On October 7, the day the 53d Commando retook Uvira and closed off the rebel supply line to Bujumbura, a message was intercepted from General Olenga in Kindu to the "President of the Congolese People's Republic" in Stanleyville. The message showed that Olenga at least thought he was still the one with the magic:

*I give you official order. If NATO aircraft bomb and kill Congolese civilian population, please kill one foreigner for each Congolese in your region. . . If no bombing, please treat foreigners as honored guests in accordance with Bantu custom. Give them food and drink.*<sup>26</sup>

When word of this order, from a general to a president, reached Washington, the GOLDEN HAWK plans came out of the "HOLD" file. The problem in either the overt or covert plan, as General Adams and the Joint Chiefs had previously pointed out, was that the precise location of the personnel to be rescued had to be known prior to the operation. A small force such as GOLDEN HAWK, relying on surprise and hoping not to have to fight, could not simply go around knocking on doors, asking for Americans. Therefore, on October 9, the Joint Chiefs directed General Adams to prepare a new plan to seize and secure the entire city until it could be turned over to the ANC—and find the Americans in the process.

Then, just to speed STRICOM's planning process and raise the crisis temperature a bit, on the fourteenth the rebel commander in

\*Major Richard Kohlbrand

Stanleyville, now identifying himself as Colonel Opepe, asked Olenga for permission to "execute a certain number" of Europeans and Americans.<sup>27</sup> This *did* make back pages of the American press, on the same day that headlines carried the news of Khrushchav's ouster. Again Tshombe went on the radio with an appeal, and again Attwood was told to get Kenyatta to intervene. Now, the Joint Chiefs ordered General Adams to alert either GOLDEN HAWK forces or other forces being organized as per his new draft plan.<sup>28</sup> Apparently the rebel threat to take action against "a certain number" of hostages versus "all," and to "execute" versus "kill," carried more cogency.

STRICOM OPLAN 519 was submitted to the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) for approval on October 15. It established a Joint Task Force (HIGH BEAM) consisting of 1 airborne infantry brigade of the 101st Airborne Division, 16 tactical fighter aircraft, between 80 and 84 troop carrier aircraft, and 20 air refuel tankers. The concept called for one battalion to parachute into three drop zones after tactical aircraft had bombed and strafed hostile activities for 10 minutes, followed by a second battalion to either assault drop or land "on call," with the rest of the brigade remaining in the United States until directed to move. The mission of one company of the initial assault battalion was to drop and move immediately to the American Consulate, "secure [the] building and raise US flag on Consulate Building."<sup>29</sup>

Because troops were now on alert and had to be told something, STRICOM published an unclassified cover plan. Alerted units were to be told they were participating in Joint Exercise ONE SHOT: at JCS direction they were to deploy to an overseas staging base in the Mediterranean area, followed by an airborne assault, including a live fire exercise in the objective area, which would be designated on arrival at the staging base.<sup>30</sup> With the dearth of news in the media about the situation in Stanleyville, one wonders how many alerted troops and airmen guessed where they might be going, that ONE SHOT was a cover for something big, and took the trouble to find Stanleyville on the map.

When OPLAN 519 first hit Washington, as one member of the Congo Working Group (CWG) said, "We were appalled." Another called it "overkill," and from then on General Adams was known in the CWG as "The Big Hawk." The Harriman team, safeguarding the

interests of the White House only 2 weeks before elections, was clearly not ready for a heavy exposure of US troops in the middle of Africa. Nevertheless, word was sneaking out: in a 3-inch column on page 15 of the October 18 *New York Times* was a short article on "Daily Massacres Reported" by Congolese escaping from Stanleyville, the bloodbath at Lumumba Monument Square "was such that the area could not be cleaned." The article did not mention Americans.

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Hoyt and his staff did not know of Opepe's and Olenga's execution threats, but they did sense waning confidence among their captors. On October 4, they were moved from the Sabena Guest House to the Congo Palace Hotel. Shortly thereafter they were back in the Central Prison:

*On Monday morning [October 5] Colonel Opepe arrived and moved us from the second to the top or seventh floor of the hotel. The seventh floor was empty except for us. We later learned we were moved to the top floor to protect the hotel from aerial bombardment.*

*No visitors all day [on October 9] but at 1830 a Simba guard arrived and told us to gather together all our possessions as we were to be moved. We were taken downstairs and loaded into the back of a truck. During this period we were shouted at by various Simbas in the area who said that we were to be killed. We then found out that General Olenga had returned at 1030 that morning from Kindu and apparently it was on his orders that we were being transferred [back] to the prison.*

### **Voices of Advice and Action**

The increasing stridency emitting from Radio Stanleyville and the growing number of eyewitness accounts of the horror prevailing in the "liberated zone" made it increasingly hard for those dealing with the Congo crisis to keep the lid on or play it "low key." By mid-October the Congo Working Group had received accurate reports of some of the indignities and beatings inflicted on Hoyt and his staff, to say nothing of the brutal, summary executions of thousands of Congolese. This, of course, as the situation dragged on, meant that the Congo-watching community was developing many voices

giving advice and lobbying for various actions. Certainly one such voice, and one having much at stake, was that of Mike Hoyt's wife

Jo Wasson Hoyt was evacuated from Stanleyville with her small son on August 4. After spending a few weeks in Leopoldville waiting for her husband to join her, she returned home to Arizona—realizing it might be a very long wait. On October 1, she received the news of the rebel radio broadcast about killing all Americans. From her book, *For the Love of Mike*: "I felt the whole situation had disintegrated into a monstrous charade, with an unstable and disorganized bandit regime exposing the United States to ridicule."

She went immediately to Washington. "In my frantic efforts to goad *somebody* into positive action, I thought of appealing to public opinion through the newspapers, or contacting any of a number of Congressmen."<sup>31</sup> Coming from Barry Goldwater's state, she no doubt could have had quite an interested audience. As one member of the Congo Working Group recalled, Jo Hoyt was "tough and marvelous" and "ready to spill her guts," if it looked as though the State Department was dilly-dallying about getting her Mike out.

On October 6 she had a personal meeting with Dean Rusk who explained the "precarious situation" in the Congo: her husband's life was in jeopardy and there was no solution in sight, his staff was examining options, but it was best not to precipitate situations that might risk physical harm to her husband. He promised to keep her informed of the bad news as well as the good, and she went home seemingly "extremely pleased with her call on the Secretary."<sup>32</sup> The Secretary had, in fact, laid the cards on the table. "Mrs. Hoyt," he reportedly told her, "I can get your husband out of Stanleyville anytime, if all you want is his dead body."

Coming 5 days after his luncheon with the visiting OAU delegation that had never been received by the President, Rusk's fatherly chat with Mrs. Hoyt expressed the President's middle-of-the-road, cautious line that would upset the fewest people in an election year: don't give in (to the rebels), don't do anything drastic, and keep the wild stories out of the press.

There were other views among Congo action officials, to include those who wondered what we were doing in the Congo in the first place, to say nothing of providing an international outcast

like Tshombe with guns, planes, and advisors. This group felt that if we had to withdraw this support in order to get Hoyt out, then it had to be.

Governor Williams and his Deputy Assistant Secretary for Africa, Wayne Fredericks, were considered by some as among the romantics and idealists concerning Africa. Both had traveled widely in Africa, and had developed close personal friendships with Black Africans, who were almost all against Tshombe. They sensed the Kennedy years of developing ties with Africa as going down the drain.

Carl Rowan, Director of the US Information Agency, in a couple of memoranda for the President, expressed a similar view: in the short term much more is at stake than Stanleyville or Leopoldville or "any amount of real estate in the Congo"; in saving the present situation we can suffer psychological and other setbacks that could lose us "the longer range struggle for all of Africa."<sup>33</sup> To this group, relying on their strong personal ties in "all of Africa," negotiation should secure Hoyt's release, especially if the United States withdrew support from Tshombe.

At the other end of the lobbying spectrum was General Paul DeWitt Adams who, as the military commander responsible to the Joint Chiefs of Staff for a third of the world, was determined to see that Africa, which was in his area of responsibility, would not become, as Vietnam was later to become, the scene of protracted US involvement. Early in the crisis he perceived the Simba rebellion as "Communist inspired and backed," with the Congo as the target of a planned double envelopment from the north and east. If we were to avoid a long, drawn-out campaign, effective action was necessary before more Communist support arrived.<sup>34</sup> To Adams this meant that his troops should be allowed to "raise the US flag on the Consulate building" in Stanleyville as quickly as possible.

General Adams had chafed when Washington put restrictions on rescuing the Dodds party behind enemy lines near Bukavu. When there were some who thought the troops of Joint Task Force LEO should appear inconspicuously in mufti, he ordered them to wear combat uniforms. Time and again he fought (unsuccessfully) to get photo reconnaissance of Stanleyville to support his operational plans. On the day Stanleyville fell to the rebels,

recognizing that the priority problem with the ANC was leadership, Adams cabled his advice to Washington that the Congolese Government should solicit experienced NCO and officer "volunteers" from countries "without Africa, not excluding the United States," and that an appropriate US agency, "covered and carefully underplayed," should assist in recruiting these volunteers <sup>35</sup>

Later, when the Embassy in Leopoldville reported that Tshombe had shown "no real understanding" of the need to slow military advance so that the Congolese Government could "fill in behind with adequate civilian administration," Adams hit the roof. He cabled the Joint Chiefs advising them of his "considerable alarm, perplexity and disbelief." Then he lectured them: "Success in battle is contingent upon attainment of principal military objectives, tail [should] not wag the dog." The Congolese Army, he said, should not be unduly inhibited in its military tasks by secondary considerations. Maintain the momentum and allow "sound military principles" to govern <sup>36</sup>

Among the Congo crisis managers in both Washington and Leopoldville, however, General Adams was not a favorite. Adams had had long years of command and combat duty, over 13 years as a general officer, and was not one to sit back as a quiet spectator. To one diplomat he was a "martinet", officers in the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, this diplomat felt, were "terrified" of him. Some felt he was abrasive. Happily for them, Adams' headquarters was in Florida, far removed from the Congo crisis nerve centers in the State Department and the Pentagon. Adams never visited the Congo Working Group; in fact, he stated that he never even knew of its existence. The overall result was that the "Big Hawk's" advice and lectures were most often ignored. However, it is doubtful that any military man calling for strong action in the Congo just before the election of 1964 would have gained much of an audience with Johnson's crisis managers.

Of the senior American diplomats close to the scene, Ambassador Donald Dumont in Bujumbura would have been perhaps most in accord with General Adams' views on action. He was nearer geographically to Stanleyville than was Leopoldville, sitting on what he called the "Stanleyville switchboard," and he had received firsthand the reports of Mr. Senn and other Red Cross delegates.

One day, perhaps in despair after hearing an atrocity story, Ambassador Dumont poured out his advice to Washington: The US Government should address an ultimatum; the danger increases daily; to remain mute "in the face of Stanleyville regime's crass insolence, effrontery, and mistreatment . . . is something we should no longer accept or let the world think we are going to accept." He then concluded with a statement that could have come straight from Teddy Roosevelt's diplomatic handbook: show the world that "our might is married to decency and self-respect and that we intend to use the one to enforce the other."<sup>37</sup>

Ambassador G. McMurtrie Godley in Leopoldville was, of course, in the action seat. Age 46, a Marine in World War II, and 23 years in the Foreign Service, he had wrestled with "the Congo problem" since 1961—first as the Deputy Chief of Mission in the Embassy in Leopoldville, and then as Director of the Office of Central African Affairs in the Department. A big, cigar-chomping man, impressing some as a bit abrupt and gruff, he had a select group of loyal followers on whom he showered loyalty in return. To his military staff he was not the "typical diplomat." Taking over his first ambassadorship only a few months before Tshombe returned to the Congo to become premier, there were some who wondered if he could handle Tshombe, the man he had previously been involved in trying to depose. Godley would be given many opportunities.

A hard-charger, Godley was at times frustrated over what appeared to be inaction in Washington. Supporting his military staff, he fought Washington's restrictions on paratroopers riding "shotgun" in helicopters and on their use to protect planes or to fight their way in or out of a rescue operation. Shortly after the fall of Stanleyville, he told Washington that his military staff was swamped doing situation reports (sitreps), which to him were nothing but summaries of reports already enroute: "Can not someone in Pentagon read all messages and do sitrep there?"<sup>38</sup>

Godley joined his military staff in criticizing Colonel Van de Waele's plan for multiply convergent columns on Stanleyville and for lack of any real US-ANC-Belgian planning. A four-pronged advance was too slow; planning was all in Van de Waele's head; after the success at Bukavu we should have merged into one massive strike force and rammed it through to Stanleyville. He was shot down: Washington did not "at this moment envisage [an] attack on

Stanleyville"; we wish to keep the Belgians in the "forefront"; hold down criticism and see that your military staff is coordinated accordingly.<sup>39</sup>

Godley was also a realist who knew the Congo. Unlike many, he did not see Chinese behind every banana tree or recognize the rebels as anything more than a disorganized rabble, taking advantage of a disorganized society. Like Adams, he too saw early that deterioration in the Congo required prompt intervention of mercenary troops ("especially officers"), but he added the wisdom that if the troops included South Africans or Rhodesians, no Congolese Government would be broad enough to stand up to African opinion. It would be better for Tshombe and his team, Godley said, "to bear onus alone or nearly alone."<sup>40</sup>

When South Africans and Rhodesians did start arriving in numbers, Godley called Washington's attention to some rather serious dilemmas. Did Washington seriously believe Tshombe could Africanize with one hand and enlist mercenaries with the other? When we were pressuring him to Africanize (the Williams' trip), were we not aware he was recruiting mercenaries? How did the United States, which was one of the first to oppose Tshombe in Katanga, get itself into the position of being his principal source of assistance? And then the clincher: If we disapproved of Tshombe's dealings, what were we prepared to do?<sup>41</sup>

Weeks later, after the DRAGON ROUGE operation had been decided and completed, the Ambassador would receive a personal letter from Spaak thanking him for bringing cogent arguments to bear to "overcome Washington's reluctance and indecision."<sup>42</sup> Godley for sure, in the weeks to come, would be a driving force for military action.

All these voices of advice and action were integrated in the Congo Working Group under Ambassador Joseph Palmer and his interagency, 24-hour staff. Further, as mentioned, the watchdog over this group and implementing the President's policy on the Congo, which the President himself never publicly announced, was Governor Harriman. The Governor, more like General Adams, was on somewhat of a "cold war wicket," which could be traced perhaps to his close, early association with NATO. Harriman felt, for example, that the Chinese hand behind the rebels went deep, when

most of the intelligence community was reporting it as only "marginal."<sup>43</sup>

General Earle G. Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was a frequent visitor to Harriman's office and as Harriman said: "Very much of all the planning [in the Congo crisis] was done between General Wheeler and myself." Apparently the two saw the situation in much the same way. Said Harriman: "Personally, I was all for giving the wherewithal to help them [the Congolese], but I didn't want to get our troops involved."<sup>44</sup> Wheeler no doubt agreed. He had a reputation as a diplomat's general—even-tempered and "not given to extreme positions," and thus well accepted and trusted by the civilians in government.<sup>45</sup> He had also just been appointed to his position by President Johnson.

The creation of the Congo Working Group and the appointment of Harriman as special overseer were, up to this point, normal crisis procedures. However, with the threats to "kill" and "execute" coming out of Stanleyville in the intercepted messages of 1, 7, and 14 October, the crisis intensified and, as it was only a few weeks before elections, the political implications for the President became more pronounced. There was increased awareness that something horrible might happen and that LBJ might appear as "impotent" in not fulfilling his obligation. Thus, higher level managers began to take a more active interest, especially Dean Rusk and George Ball—being always careful to "safeguard Harriman's feelings." Having created GOLDEN HAWK and Joint Task Force HIGH BEAM, both options for action, they realized the President could be "crucified" for doing nothing if, following knowledge of the threats, all hell were to break loose in Stanleyville—and the public found out what he could have done.<sup>46</sup>

On the surface everything was still moderately quiet and appeared to be going the President's way, as this editorial comment in the *New York Times* seemed to indicate:

As the Presidential campaign enters its final three weeks, the Republicans are struggling against defeatism, the Democrats are fighting overconfidence, and Senator Goldwater is still looking for an issue.<sup>47</sup>

An issue? Tshombe would soon strain the voices of advice and action to their highest pitch yet.

## **The Stand-Down**

In early September, General Mobutu, Commander-in-Chief of the ANC, received seven B-26 bombers ("long-range reconnaissance planes") as part of the quid pro quo arrangements made with Tshombe by Governor Williams during his visit to Leopoldville. Straightaway, Mobutu proposed putting his new weapon into action by bombing Stanleyville—sound military logic, just as the Allies had bombed Berlin.

In Washington the alarm bell rang! From the Congo Working Group a message was flashed to Ambassador Godley instructing him to emphasize a few facts of life to the Congo's leaders. The B-26s were on 60-day loan to the Congo *but* could be withdrawn earlier. We controlled the Cuban pilots flying the planes, plus the gas and spare parts. The planes should *not* be used to bomb cities!

Godley fretted. To him it was a "major error" to ask Mobutu and Tshombe not to take air action against Stanleyville. This could cripple the ANC and the rebels might thus see the logic of holding hostages not only against air attacks, but also against other forms of attack. Besides, Tshombe and Mobutu might form their own air force with mercenaries and "we then may have to have [a] heart-to-heart with Tshombe and Mobutu."<sup>48</sup>

Unfortunately, this was exactly what Tshombe and Mobutu did. They formed the 21st Squadron, with mercenary pilots and T-3 aircraft. The planes had been given earlier in the year, with no strings attached, by the Italians as a result of US efforts to promote bilateral assistance programs between NATO allies and the Congo. Now the United States had no control.

The Congo Working Group cabled the Embassy in Leopoldville: this could be a serious political liability and we must take a "very firm line." Godley answered that our bargaining position was somewhat reduced since four of the twelve T-28s were inoperable due to a shortage of crews, and four of the seven B-26s were structurally unsafe and the "Cubans won't fly" them.<sup>49</sup> And then, almost as if Olenga and Opepe were privy to the cable traffic between Godley and the Congo Working Group, messages started coming out of Radio Stanleyville that NATO aircraft were bombing Congolese, that one foreigner would be executed for every

Congolese killed, and so on. With these messages Washington decided that more action was needed than a mere heart-to-heart talk.

On October 15, in a cable written by Ambassador Palmer of the Congo Working Group and approved personally by Secretary Rusk, Godley was told to see Tshombe immediately and urge him to suspend T-28 and B-26 operations for 72 hours while we reviewed "at highest level" the use of our aircraft. Godley was instructed to emphasize that it would be in no one's interest if continued air strikes resulted in reprisals, and that if Tshombe failed to respond or threatened to put his 21st Squadron into action, we might be forced to withdraw our military assistance altogether. In an aside, Godley was advised that Washington "thru other channels"<sup>50</sup> was ordering "a stand-down" (grounding) of T-28 and B-26 flights—just in case Tshombe failed to respond.<sup>51</sup>

A few hours later Godley received another message. If Tshombe, despite Godley's demarche, deployed the 21st Squadron, Godley should send a message to Stanleyville telling the rebels that the US Government was protesting Tshombe's employment of the squadron and was disassociating itself from Tshombe's actions, was ending all operations involving US aircraft, and was taking steps to withdraw all US aircraft. Ambassador Dumont in Bujumbura was told to warm up his "switchboard," and, when and if told, to send this same information to Hoyt "by any and all means which will assure transmission and/or rebel knowledge."<sup>52</sup> Times like this are tough on ambassadors.

Ambassador Godley drafted his reply to Washington at 5 o'clock the next morning. He would take action as directed, but he was deeply concerned by the "starkness" of the message and about Congolese reactions. Towns such as Bukavu and Uvira were still under grave threat, and if they should fall during the stand-down for lack of air support the United States could be blamed. What about Belgian advisors, counting on US air support as our part of the military assistance bargain? It would look as though we were panicking, abandoning Tshombe, and giving in to rebel blackmail.<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, Washington kept up the pressure.

On October 20, the Congo Working Group cabled a new demand to be presented to Tshombe: not only were Tshombe and Mobutu to refrain from using aircraft to attack cities, but also the

Congolese Government should formally announce this "to rebels and to world." Tshombe should publish a communique saying that his government would act in accordance with the Geneva Convention and insisting that the rebel government do the same. When and if Tshombe issued such a public statement, Godley was told, the planes "can go back in the air."<sup>54</sup>

Godley fretted again; now there was another hitch. Five days had gone by since Godley had received the original stand-down instructions, the planes had been grounded "through other channels," and Tshombe was refusing to see him. Godley was told that Tshombe had been "ordered to bed."

Godley gave Tshombe's Belgian secretary a note containing the essence of Washington's demands, assuming she would relay it to Tshombe, bedridden or not.<sup>55</sup> The next afternoon, Tshombe came by the Ambassador's residence. Said Tshombe: "You know my people are furious with what you have done with our aviation." Nonetheless he told Godley he would issue a communique, and Godley recommended an end to the stand-down.<sup>56</sup>

In an undated, unsigned copy of a White House staff paper on "The Congo," the author of the paper<sup>57</sup> recorded his observation of where the Congo crisis managers stood on the stand-down issue. The dilemma was one that has been raised since the advent of airpower: that cities should not be hit at all versus the recognition that cities have legitimate military targets which may be hit, if in so doing civilian populations are not wantonly endangered. There was now, of course, a difference: the city was Stanleyville where the rebels considered no target to be legitimate.

- Defense, CIA, and Harriman wanted to resume air attacks as a calculated risk; the military situation demanded air support, and the US Government must avoid the appearance of yielding to blackmail.
- Godley was worried about deterioration in the political/military situation due to the stand-down and had recommended its cancellation.
- Ball and Palmer wanted a public statement from Tshombe that there would be no air attacks against cities; if we

yielded to Tshombe now, it would establish a dangerous precedent and endanger our future ability to influence a situation where we might have "deep and hazardous commitments."<sup>58</sup>

No formal record could be found of who resolved the issue, but by this time Deputy Secretary of State George Ball was apparently playing a bigger role—the crisis management being raised one notch above Harriman. Apparently also, in resolving the issue it was decided that Tshombe should not be trusted to write his own communique, as he had told Godley he would.

So shortly before midnight on October 21, a telegram went out to Godley, drafted by Ball, with the texts of two letters proposed for Tshombe's signature: one was to the President of the International Commission of the Red Cross (ICRC) saying that the Congolese Government would abide by the Geneva Convention and that Tshombe was directing his air force "to limit its actions to military objectives and not to conduct strikes against cities;" and the other was to Kenyatta, President of the OAU Special Commission, enclosing a copy of the ICRC letter and urging him to assist the ICRC in obtaining cooperation of the Stanleyville regime vis-a-vis the hostages, the Convention, and so forth.<sup>59</sup>

The next morning, Godley, no doubt realizing he was going to have another demanding day, again cabled his views to Washington. The United States was dealing in an "emotion-charged atmosphere with simple, uneducated people" in a country where the "entire governmental structure is [a] delicate balance of various forces." A clear chain of command, he noted, hardly existed.

The idea of not attacking cities, he continued, was lost on the Congolese, as it probably was on most Africans. Public statements of adherence to "rules" may not afford hostages as much protection as would energetic efforts to press forward with the military campaign as quickly as possible. In defeat, the rebels' first inclination was to run for the bush; when overconfident, they molested Europeans in the belief they could do so with impunity. The rebel leaders' control over their troops was at best precarious, hence the primary objective should be an early convincing demonstration of military strength.<sup>60</sup>

In another message, almost as an afterthought, Godley reported that a journalist had noted that the B-26s and T-28s were not flying due to "maintenance." If the true reason leaks, he said, "we will have destroyed the fiction that the aircraft are completely under Congolese control."<sup>61</sup>

Godley's arguments were to no avail. At noon the next day, October 23, a telegram "for Godley from Ball" arrived at the Embassy with guidelines for the use of aircraft (and the contingent lifting of the stand-down).<sup>62</sup>

- No air activity of any kind is authorized within 25 miles of Stanleyville;
- No air target is authorized within a belt 5 miles wide, measured from the outskirts, around any large or sensitive urban area;
- Air combat missions are restricted to military targets, provided such targets do not contain noncombatants, "such as wives and children in military barracks area";
- Air reconnaissance is authorized over urban areas and surrounding belts (except Stanleyville) only if the plane flies a minimum altitude of 3,000 feet and does not open or return fire;
- With B-26s there must be at least a 5-minute interval between any combat run on targets outside an urban area and its surrounding belt and any reconnaissance run within the area and belt.

A few hours later Godley reported that he had seen Tshombe who had signed the letters to Kenyatta and the President of the ICRC and had agreed to the guidelines. The stand-down was lifted.

From STRICOM came another lecture from General Adams for the Joint Chiefs about the proper use of military force: "This Headquarters remains deeply concerned about the serious restrictions which appear to have been placed on the conduct of military operations in the Congo." To Adams it was regrettable that five Americans were being held, but that should not have precluded

the "proper conduct of military operations designed for bringing the rebellion to an early end."

Military objectives in the Congo, Adams pointed out, consisted primarily of cities and towns held by the rebels—with very little combat taking place elsewhere. Since most African soldiers kept their families with or near them at all times to do the menial chores, there was no such thing as a military target that did not contain noncombatants. Thus, the guidelines permitted the rebels to remain in towns unmolested, enjoying the communications, supplies, services, and comforts of urban facilities. He concluded that there was "no question that this is the chief purpose for which the rebel propaganda campaign is designed."<sup>63</sup> To the General, the stand-down and the guidelines were another case of the tail wagging the dog.

As a matter of interest, the day after Tshombe signed the two letters and the stand-down was lifted, the 21st Squadron attacked Boende, 300 miles west of Stanleyville. A mercenary unit then entered the town almost unopposed and found the bodies of three Belgians, executed several days before as a reprisal for a previous attack.

Washington naturally requested immediate clarification of this use of the 21st Squadron in violation of the letters and the guidelines. Who were the pilots? Who gave the orders? Washington got an answer in 4 hours. The pilots were mercenaries—two Belgians, one Frenchman, and one Rhodesian. The use of the 21st had provided obvious support for the ground column, as most all rebels had fled the town upon the column's arrival. General Mobutu had given the order to employ the 21st a week before and had apparently "forgot" to rescind it after Tshombe had signed the letters.<sup>64</sup>

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On the day Tshombe signed the letters, the five Americans in Stanleyville Central Prison were joined by another American:

*Late in the afternoon [October 23], about 1600 Dr. Paul Carlson arrived in prison and was put in our cell. Carlson related his history. . . . At 1800 Carlson was taken away from our cell and put in solitary confinement.*

## The History of "Major" Paul Carlson

On October 25, Radio Stanleyville broadcast a communique from Gbenye, President of the Congolese Peoples' Republic, that a "United States major" named Carlson had been arrested for "spying" and had been brought to Stanleyville for trial by a military tribunal.<sup>65</sup> Carlson was, of course, not a major. He had served one enlistment as a seaman in the Navy when he was 18, but in mid-1964 he was a 36-year-old surgeon serving with dedication the cause of the Covenant World Mission<sup>66</sup> in the Congo.

Unfortunately, Carlson had short-cropped hair, was rather athletic in appearance, and at least looked the military part. Unfortunately also, Gbenye desperately needed an American who could be flaunted before his Simbas and *jeunesse* as a living, breathing example of the "thousands" of Americans against whom, as the rebel propaganda machine had been blaring, the Popular Army had been fighting—and recently losing. Carlson was to become one of those characters in history who bursts suddenly and briefly upon the world scene, even making the covers of *Time* and *Life* magazines,<sup>67</sup> and who is then forgotten. But in so doing, he would raise the Congo crisis one more level.

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On September 4, the day Gbenye the "Venerable One" arrived in Stanleyville, Carlson decided it was time to evacuate with his wife and two children their missionary station at Wasolo, 300 miles northwest of Stanleyville. This decision was prompted by the increasingly alarming reports coming to them over the missionary radio network, from the officials at the US Embassy in Bangui, and from their contacts with local Congolese. Leaving their station at Wasolo, they made the half-hour drive to Yakoma and there crossed the Ubangi River to relative safety in the Central African Republic. A couple of days later, after Sunday dinner, Carlson returned to Wasolo to check his patients and retrieve a few items for family comfort. He was intending to rejoin his family on Wednesday, September 9. He never made it.<sup>68</sup>

On the twelfth, missionaries reported to the American Embassy in Bangui that at 0730 hours they had had radio contact with Carlson from Wasolo. He had reported that his attempts to

recross the Ubangi had failed. Rebels were in Yakoma in force and he would wait until they had moved on before trying again. The next day he again made contact, relaying a message from an African pastor urging all villagers to fight the rebels with machetes. There was contact the morning of the seventeenth, he was still trying to get away and then silence. Nothing more was heard until Gbenye's communique over a month later.<sup>66</sup>

In the history Carlson related to his fellow prisoners in Stanleyville he told of being arrested at his mission hospital, accused of having radio communications with Americans, and then being taken to the prison at Aketi. During this period he was severely abused. After a few days he was moved to Butu and placed under house arrest with a group of Catholic priests. He remained at this mission without further abuse, until Gbenye arrived, noticed his presence, and personally ordered him transferred to Stanleyville. As Carlson told his fellow American prisoners, he regretted not having left Wasolo much earlier when he had the opportunity and he complained "bitterly" that the Bangui Embassy directives concerning evacuation had been vague.<sup>70</sup>

Carlson was kept in solitary confinement only overnight—luckily. Five days later the Americans discovered what could happen to prisoners in solitary:

*In the morning [October 28] we were informed by the chief trusty of the prison that 11 political prisoners were taken from solitary confinement at midnight the previous day. These prisoners were executed and their bodies sewn into sacks and thrown into the Tshopo River, about the [Stanley] falls.*

### **The Six-Point Demarche**

The stand-down of support aircraft not only made Tshombe "furious" and caused Ambassador Godley concern, but also incurred some rumblings in Brussels. By late October, organizational, training, and logistical problems had been sufficiently resolved that the *force majeure* of the Van de Waele Plan—a strong column of mercenary and ANC troops advancing on Stanleyville from the south—was nearing readiness. As Ambassador MacArthur reported from Brussels, if the United States were to withhold air support from this column, the Belgians might

withdraw their support from the entire operation. It was clearly the time for a working-level visit to Brussels and Leopoldville. As one White House official said, someone also had to get to Godley and "cool him off," to let him know Washington was on top of the situation.

On October 26, Ambassador Palmer and William Brubeck, principal players and the two charter members in the Congo Working Group, arrived in Brussels and met with Spaak and his political and military advisors. Spaak proposed six points, which he suggested that the United States and Belgium make as a common demarche to Tshombe.

The outcome of the demarche is academic, for between Tshombe's diplomatic parries and the events to follow, nothing of substance materialized. But consideration of the proposals is significant in this study as a review and compilation of the thinking in Washington and Brussels on the one hand, and the "field" or Leopoldville on the other, in the period just before the final countdown on Stanleyville. Godley received the proposals on the same day as the meeting in Brussels, and the next day he cabled his thoughts to Washington, reporting that his British, German, Israeli, and Belgian counterparts shared "generally" his views:<sup>71</sup>

—Point 1:

Brussels: We are greatly concerned about Tshombe's use of South African mercenaries; we should insist he get rid of them.

Leopoldville: Who will replace them? It is clear Spaak is not ready to put more Belgians in the front lines; the mercenaries are doing most of the fighting; and we should not be deluded by extreme African propaganda that mercenaries are the chief obstacle to acceptance of Tshombe; he will never be acceptable until he reorients his foreign policy; the mercenaries provide a popular issue with which the radical Africans hope to provoke the moderates into an anti-Tshombe line.

—Point 2:

Brussels: We should not accept excessive use of force and brutality in military operations.

Leopoldville: Ninety percent of the brutality is on the part of the rebels and the ANC, not the mercenaries, air power is increasingly effective in saving lives on both sides, the "decisive factor when properly used "

—Point 3.

Brussels: There is no purely military solution in the Congo, we must encourage Tshombe to "broaden" his government, to include statesmen more acceptable to the rebels, if such will enhance a viable solution

Leopoldville: Adding statesmen to the Central Government will not bring immediate peace and they might be tagged as our stooges; no one, two, or three leaders speak for the rebels, leaders like Gbenye and Soumialot are unsure of their authority and are provoked by the radicals to take extreme positions.

—Point 4

Brussels: We should encourage Kenyatta's OAU Commission to do something constructive.

Leopoldville: Agree the effort is desirable but the effect is doubtful; there is the danger that radical members might insist we freeze our military assistance while negotiations are pending, which could draw out indefinitely and allow the rebels to consolidate their hold, get foreign support, et cetera.

—Point 5

Brussels: Tshombe must not take any action vis-a-vis Stanleyville without consulting us

Leopoldville: This questions Congolese sovereignty about which Tshombe and his colleagues are most sensitive, they are already aware how much we call the tune; rebels tend to molest Europeans when they are over-confident, have the upper hand, and have little cause for retribution; this suggests that we move ahead with the military campaign as quickly as possible

—Point 6:

Brussels: Together we reaffirm our commitments to the Congo and will cooperate fully in carrying them out.

Leopoldville: Commitments are difficult to define and we must tread lightly; the stand-down was a "flagrant failure" to meet such commitments; assurances to Tshombe are most effective when backed up by positive actions "rather than spiced with so many admonitions;" we have "strong reservations" about a joint demarche to Tshombe at this time.

Interestingly, in the entire six-point demarche there was not a single proposal for joint action to rescue the 800 hostages Olenga now claimed he was holding in Stanleyville. Washington apparently was still hopeful, less than a week before elections, that with diplomacy, negotiation, and getting Tshombe to "mend his African fences," the GOLDEN HAWK and HIGH BEAM options could stay in the files.

After leaving Brussels Palmer and Brubeck flew to Leopoldville and met with Tshombe. Tshombe gave assurances that he would release publicly the letters sent to the ICRC and to Kenyatta, urge the OAU Commission to come to Leopoldville to consider how it could help the situation at Stanleyville, and that he would order the ANC not to schedule air strikes against cities. He acknowledged US concern about the 21st Squadron, and the two Congo Working Group charter members returned to Washington.<sup>72</sup> As mentioned, the visits and the demarche were largely academic.

Suddenly it was a new ball game!

—Early in the afternoon of October 29, the "switchboard" in Bujumbura intercepted a message from Gbenye to King Baudouin: Since the Belgians are attacking us, "we can no longer guarantee the security of Belgian subjects and their properties."<sup>73</sup>

—The next day a communique, obviously dictated under duress, was intercepted from the Belgian Consul in Stanleyville: "All Belgian and American subjects in

Stanleyville, including members of Consulates, are under house arrest"; I ask you in the name of 5,000 Belgians living in the "liberated territories" to forbid participation by Belgian officers, and attacks by air, and "our liberation depends on this."<sup>74</sup>

—The same day, Gbenye broadcast an appeal to the rulers of the five African states with whom he apparently felt the most attachment:<sup>75</sup> I make "a last cry in the name of Lumumba"; if you do not intervene in the next few hours, I will follow a policy of scorched earth and Americans and Belgians will find "nothing but a desert."<sup>76</sup>

As the above messages started to arrive in Washington, Sam Belk on the White House staff, apparently pinch-hitting for Brubeck while the latter was visiting Brussels and Leopoldville, forwarded a note to "Mac" (Bundy) with word of the house arrest of all foreigners. Belk wrote: "This shouldn't cause undue alarm. There is a good argument that being under house arrest is far safer than being free to roam the streets."<sup>77</sup>

This might have been true, but it would also seem that Belk had missed the significance of the messages: Belgians in Stanleyville were now in the same plight as Americans; and Spaak, with about 800 Belgians in rebel-held territory, would never be able to downplay the events in Stanleyville to the extent LBJ had

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Hoyt and his staff in the Central Prison probably realized the significance:

*In the late morning [of October 30] the Belgian Consul and Vice Consul, Baron Nothomb and Paul Duquay, appeared in prison and were put in our cell. They described how they had been arrested with many other Belgians on Wednesday [the twenty-eighth] and all crowded into the Hotel de Chutes. On Thursday they were visited by General Olenga who in front of all the Belgian prisoners hit Nothomb seven times on the nose until blood flowed. The cause for the arrest of the Belgians according to Olenga's impassioned speech, was that he had intercepted an ANC radio message which "proved" that the Belgian Consul General in Bukavu was responsible for directing ANC operations against the Popular Army.*

## Endnotes

1. Message, Embassy Leopoldville 374 to Department of State (received 061740 August 1964)
2. Charles Davis, his wife, and two small children were arrested on August 22 by Simbas at their mission station 80 kms from Stanleyville. Davis was imprisoned with Hoyt and his staff until September 11. His wife and children were allowed to live with other missionaries in Stanleyville
3. Message, JCS 8360 to CINCSTRIKE/CINCMEAFSA (transmitted 041829 September 1964)
4. Message, USSTRICOM STRJ5 594/64 to JCS (transmitted 071630 September 1964).
5. JCSM-788-64, 12 September 1964 The writer does not know the author of the sentence. Most likely it was written by an Africa desk officer in the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
6. Message, Department of State Circular 349 to All African Posts (transmitted 221902 August 1964)
7. Message, Department of State 425 to Embassy Leopoldville (transmitted 231259 August 1964)
8. Message, Department of State 561 to Embassy Leopoldville (transmitted 012242 September 1964)
9. Message, Embassy Lome 96 to Department of State (received 031443 September 1964)
10. *New York Times*, 6 September 1964, p. 7
11. Message, Embassy Dar es Salaam 506 to Department of State (received 111943 September 1964)
12. Message, Embassy Addis Ababa 401 to Department of State (received 100122 September 1964)
13. Message, Embassy Nairobi 661 to Department of State (received 200456 September 1964)
14. Message, Embassy Nairobi 715 to Department of State (received 221329 September 1964)
15. Message, Department of State 1001 to Embassy Nairobi (transmitted 221937 September 1964)
16. Message, Embassy Nairobi 718 to Department of State (received 221909 September 1964)

17. Message, Embassy Accra 241 to Department of State (received 232320 September 1964).
18. Memorandum, William Brubeck to McGeorge Bundy, 23 September 1964.
19. Message, Department of State 1020 to Embassy Leopoldville (transmitted 232137 September 1964).
20. Message, Embassy Bangui 20 to Embassy Geneva (received 270540 September 1964).
21. Message, Embassy Bangui 151 to Department of State (received 271213 September 1964); message, Embassy Bangui 20 to Embassy Geneva (received 270540 September 1964); message, Embassy Bujumbura 319 to Department of State (received 011349 October 1964).
22. William Scholten, a 35-year-old missionary with the Unevangelized Fields Mission, died in prison in late September 1964, after severe beatings and mistreatment by the Simbas.
23. Message, Embassy Geneva 691 to Department of State (received 291653 September 1964).
24. Later, Walker Diamanti, as a member of the Congo Working Group, made up a voucher authorizing payment of \$117,000 to the ICRC for its services and expenses.
25. Message, CAP64263, McGeorge Bundy to Jack Valenti, 1 October 1964.
26. David Reed, *111 Days in Stanleyville* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 136. Writer's underlining for emphasis.
27. *New York Times*, 16 October 1964, p. 2.
28. Message, JCS 9807 to CINCS TRIKE/MEAFSA (transmitted 141647 October 1964)
29. Message, CINCS TRIKE/MEAFSA STRJ3-OD 677/64 to JCS (transmitted 150110 October 1964), message, CINCS TRIKE/MEAFSA STRJ3-735/64 to JCS (transmitted 190225 October 1964).
30. Message, CINCS TRIKE/MEAFSA STRJ3 11297 to JCS (transmitted 171857 October 1964).
31. Jo Wasson Hoyt, *For the Love of Mike* (New York: Random House, 1966), pp 181-182 (Emphasis by Mrs. Hoyt)
32. Memorandum of Conversation, Department of State, Dean Rusk and Mrs. M. Hoyt, 6 October 1964.
33. Memorandum from Director USIS for the President, "Propaganda Problems Relating to the Congo," 14 August 1964.

34. Message, CINCSRIKE/MEAFSA STRCC 9424 to JCS (transmitted 082131 September 1964)
35. Message, CINCSRIKE/MEAFSA STRJ5-PP8102 to JCS (transmitted 052026 August 1964); message, CINCSRIKE/MEAFSA STRCC 678/64 to JCS (transmitted 150220 October 1964); message, Embassy Leopoldville 1133 to Department of State (received 201202 September 1964).
36. Message, CINCSRIKE/MEAFSA STRCC 193C to JCS (transmitted 050005 November 1964).
37. Message, Embassy Bujumbura 442 to Department of State (received 041652 November 1964).
38. Message, Embassy Leopoldville 849 to Department of State (received 300455 August 1964).
39. Message, Embassy Leopoldville 1066 to Department of State (received 142054 September 1964); message, Department of State 656 to Embassy Leopoldville (transmitted 111916 September 1964).
40. Message, Embassy Leopoldville 414 to Department of State (received 081352 August 1964)
41. Message, Embassy Leopoldville 722 to Department of State (received 241536 August 1964)
42. Interview, Ambassador Godley, 28 September 1977
43. Memorandum for the President from "McGB," 11 August 1964
44. Interview with Governor Harriman, 21 October 1977
45. Interview with General Harold K. Johnson, 1 December 1977
46. Interview, William Brubeck, 27 January 1978
47. *New York Times*, 11 October 1964, p. 12E.
48. Message, Department of State 600 to Embassy Leopoldville (transmitted 041714 September 1964); message, Embassy Leopoldville 1292 to Department of State (received 300146 September 1964)
49. Message, Department of State 922 to Embassy Leopoldville (transmitted 111318 October 1964), message, Embassy Leopoldville 1468 to Department of State (received 131250 October 1964).
50. This was a reference to the CIA which, as was previously mentioned, controlled T-28 and B-26 operations and the Cuban pilots
51. Message, Department of State 958 to Embassy Leopoldville (transmitted 151459 October 1964)

52. Message, Department of State 965 to Embassy Leopoldville (transmitted 152331 October 1964).

53. Message, Embassy Leopoldville 1497 to Department of State (received 160357 October 1964).

54. Message, Department of State 1006 to Embassy Leopoldville (transmitted 202136 October 1964).

55. Message, Embassy Leopoldville 1534 to Department of State (received 191603 October 1964); message, Embassy Leopoldville 1561 to Department of State (received 201827 October 1964).

56. Message, Embassy Leopoldville 1571 to Department of State (received 211657 October 1964); message, Embassy Leopoldville 1573 to Department of State (received 212027 October 1964).

57. Probably William H. Brubeck.

58. Undated, unsigned paper from White House files, subject: The Congo.

59. Message, Department of State 1017 to Embassy Leopoldville (transmitted 212348 October 1964).

60. Message, Embassy Leopoldville 1580 to Department of State (received 220905 October 1964).

61. Message, Embassy Leopoldville 1583 to Department of State (received 220857 October 1964).

62. Message, Department of State 1030 to Embassy Leopoldville (transmitted 23 October 1964).

63. Message, CINCSTRIKE/MEAFSA STRCC 841/64 to JCS (transmitted 291945 October 1964).

64. Message, Department State 1055 to Embassy Leopoldville (transmitted 261208 October 1964); message, Embassy Leopoldville 1633 to Department of State (received 261609 October 1964).

65. *New York Times*, 29 October 1964, p. 13.

66. Missionary arm of the Evangelical Covenant Church of America, a small Protestant denomination with headquarters in Chicago.

67. 4 December 1964

68. Lois Carlson, *Monganga Paul* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 141.

69. Messages, Embassy Bangui to Embassy Leopoldville: 52 (received 120511 September 1964); 53 (received 130645 September 1964); and 67 (received 200620 September 1964).

70. David Grinwis. "A Journal . . ." p. 57, (see footnote 1, chapter 1).

71. Godley made no mention of his French counterpart. Throughout the crisis period and probably following instructions from Paris, French officials in Leopoldville remained aloof from their American counterparts. In fact, Godley felt that there were occasions when the French actually tried to sabotage American efforts in the Congo. Department of State INR "Congo Situation Report, October 28, 1964 (0700)." Message, Embassy Leopoldville 1650 to Department of State (received 271647 October 1964)

72. Message, Embassy Leopoldville 1671 to Department of State (received 292112 October 1964).

73. Message, Embassy Bujumbura 422 to Department of State (received 300715 October 1964).

74. There were only about 800 Belgians living in the "liberated territories," which the Consul certainly knew; message, Embassy Bujumbura 421 to Department of State (received 300708 October 1964).

75. Nkrumah of Ghana, Ben Bella of Algeria, Nasser of UAR, Kerta of Mali, and Toure of Guinea.

76. Message, Embassy Leopoldville 1691 to Department of State (received 310029 October 1964).

77. White House note, Sam Belk to McGeorge Bundy, 29 October 1964.



Ascension Island: C-130 aircraft awaiting loading orders



Ascension Island: Belgian paratroopers ready to load



Kamina: A Belgian paratrooper checking his equipment

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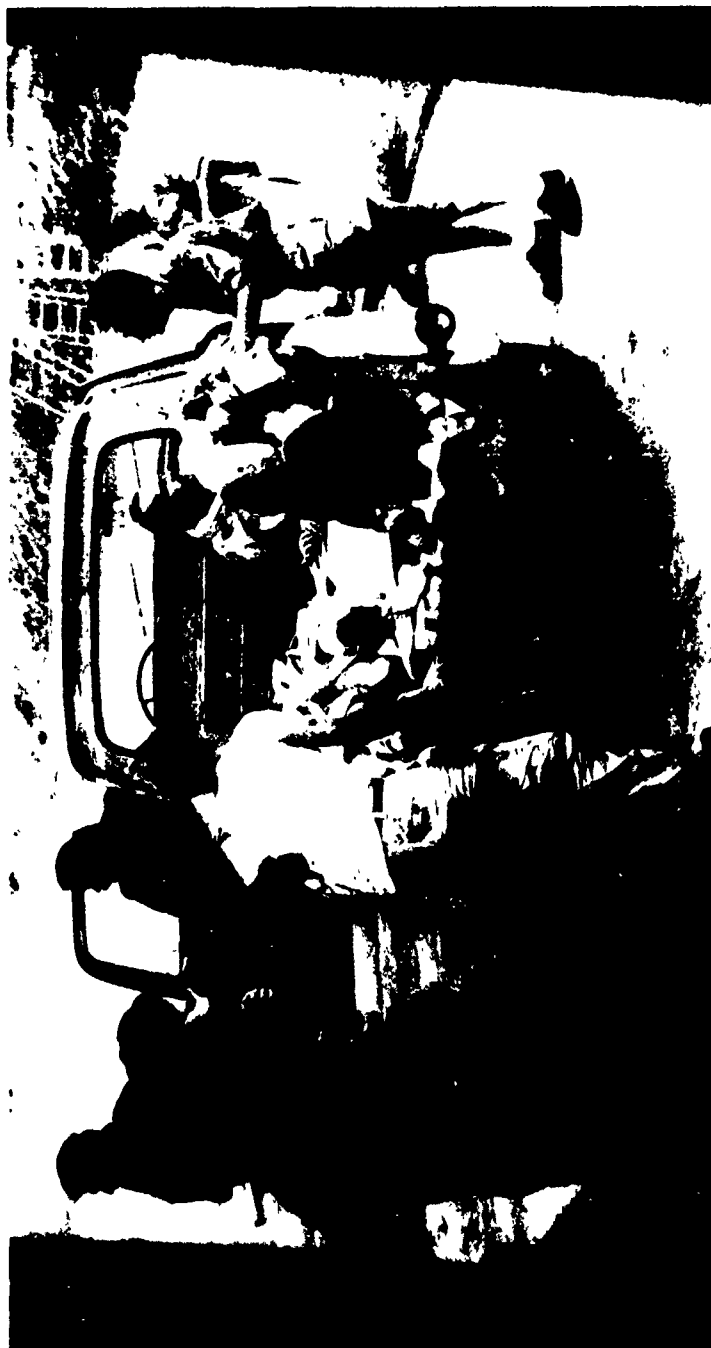
Belgian paratroopers enroute to Stanleyville



Captured Simbas being interrogated at Stanleyville airport after  
the DRAGON ROUGE Operation



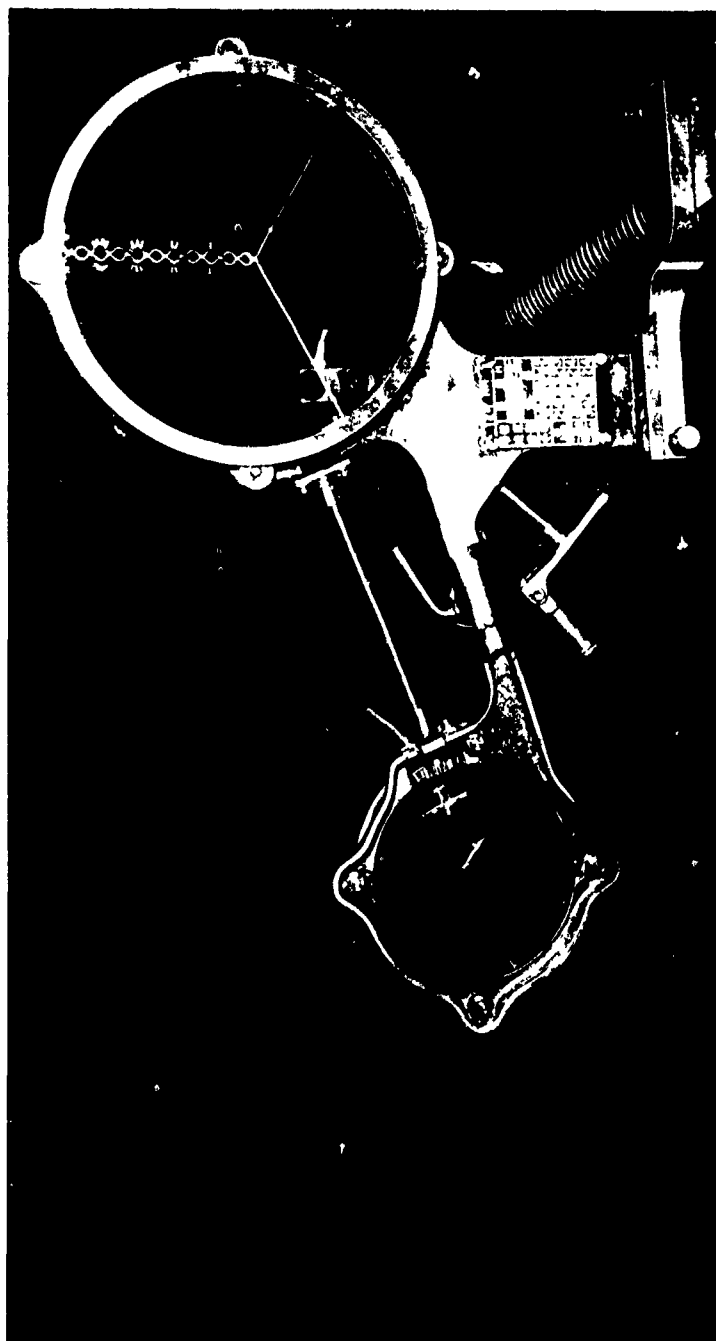
Stanleyville Airport: The first evacuees arrive after the morning massacre



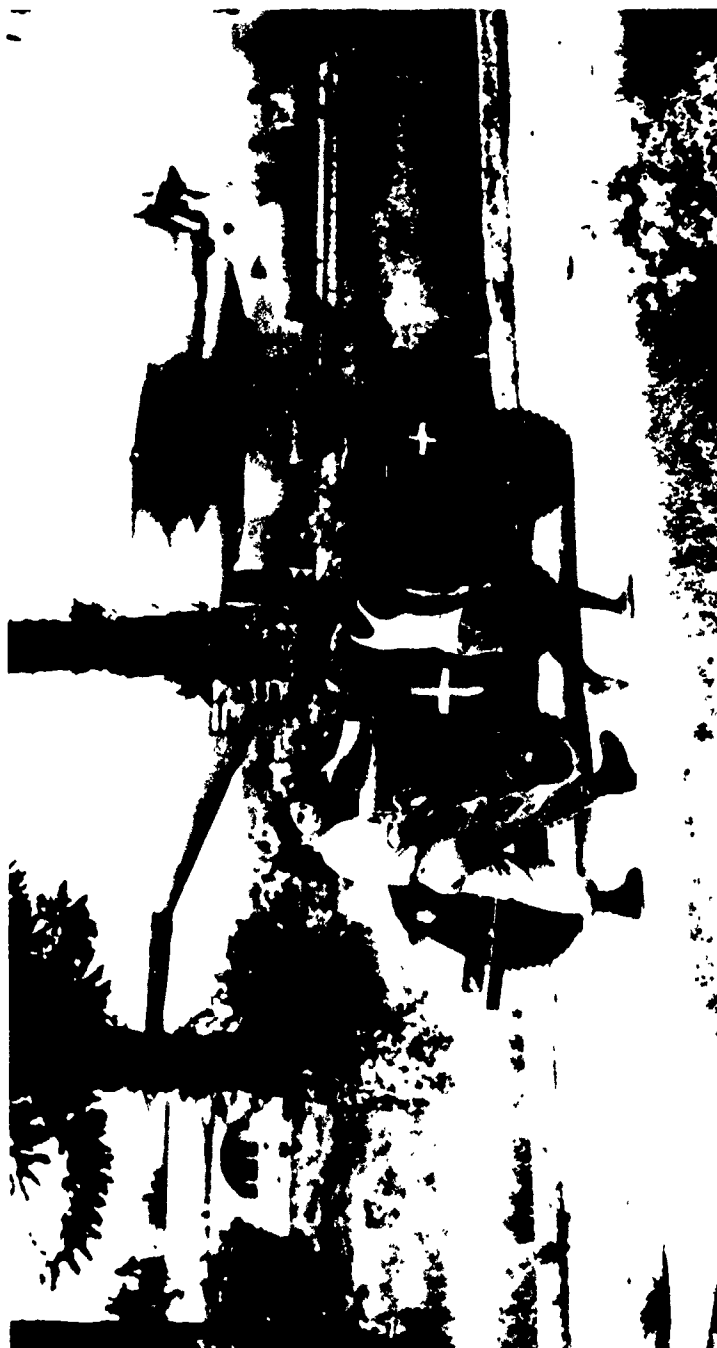
Stanleyville Airport: Wounded being unloaded for the evacuation flight to Leopoldville



Stanleyville Airport: Belgian paratroopers helping wounded hostages onto a waiting C-130 after their rescue



Stanleyville Airport: The captured Chinese 12.7mm machine gun which the rebels apparently did not know how to use



Stanleyville Airport: A Belgian paratrooper escorts a captured  
Simba



Wounded hostages receiving medical aid in a C-130 aircraft  
while enroute from Stanleyville to Leopoldville



Leopoldville Airport: Moise Tshombe watches as the C-130s  
land after DRAGON ROUGE



Ambassador G. McMurtrie Godley supervises the placing of the American flag over the body of Dr. Paul Carlson



C-130 lands at Paulis airstrip to evacuate the last of the rescued hostages and begin withdrawal of the Belgian paratroopers

## **November**

**5**

Before beginning the final countdown on Stanleyville, a brief review is appropriate of the support Gbenye was hoping to receive when he made his "last cry in the name of Lumumba." It is revealing that Gbenye had to make this desperate appeal at all, especially when one recalls the international support received in 1961 by Antoine Gizenga's secessionist regime in Stanleyville.

In 1961, a few months after declaring his secessionist regime, Gizenga had received diplomatic recognition from Peking, Moscow, Cairo, and many other Bloc and African states, and the Yugoslavs had rushed into Stanleyville to establish an embassy. In 1964, after 10 months of revolution incited by Gbenye's CNL and Olenga's Popular Army, the Stanleyville regime had no diplomatic recognition and, as the Red Cross delegation felt, based on what had been seen during its 1-day visit to Stanleyville, the Popular Army had received little military hardware. Where was the Chinese "hand" Governor Harriman saw? And where was the Communist "double envelopment" General Adams saw coming from the north and east?

Shortly after the fall of Stanleyville on August 5, the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research circulated a study that contained some interesting observations. According to the study there were 15 to 18 Chinese in Brazzaville and 22 in Bujumbura, and it was logical to assume that some of them were

soldiers and guerrilla warfare experts. They had established a small camp at Gambone 100 miles northeast of Brazzaville, and surely, the study inferred, a few rebels had received some training there and overseas. There were reports that a few Chinese had been seen with Soumialot in Uvira, but they had not been seen doing any fighting. Doubtlessly, as the Red Cross delegates had speculated, advice and funds were being passed to rebel representatives in various capitals in Africa. But apparently there had been no rush of arms to or active support of the rebels in the field. As the study said, the Chinese might be contributing an "element of sophistication" here and there, but the eastern Congo had collapsed from within, without Chinese help.

The report concluded with an observation which Gbenye probably realized when he made his "last cry": On balance, Peking would first test the viability of a rebel government and "weigh reactions [of] radical African states before making [any] overt and substantial commitment."<sup>1</sup> In short, Peking and other potential contributors of support were not sure who were "viable" in Stanleyville—Gbenye, Soumialot, Olenga, or anyone—and while radical African states had been loud in their condemnation of Tshombe, they had not been equally vocal in their praise of the Stanleyville regime. They too were sniffing the tribal air—and did not like the scent.

This appraisal was basically still valid on November 1. There were unconfirmed rumors and reports, but there was no hard evidence of a major arms or training support program to the rebels.<sup>\*</sup> This, of course, was time-sensitive and time was not on the side of the central government. There was a new government in Sudan which was taking more of an anti-Tshombe line than had its predecessor and perhaps it would hear Gbenye's cry. Also, Colonel Idi Amin, Chief of the Ugandan Armed Forces, was suspected of organizing a bit of gunrunning out of Arua, just across the Congo's northeastern frontier. At any rate, as Ambassador Godley urged Washington early in November, there was a need to speed up operations before the rebels started receiving effective help.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>\*</sup>While the rebels did have some small arms of Communist manufacture, the bulk of their arms were weapons captured from the ANC. After retaking Stanleyville, the DRAGON ROUGE force found one Chinese 12.7mm heavy anti-aircraft machine gun. It had not been fired. Later, in a river crossing operation north of Stanleyville, supporting B-26s reported receiving heavy 12.7mm anti-aircraft fire, and one badly hit aircraft barely made it back to its base in Albertville.

## **The Van de Waele Column**

One person in full agreement with Godley was Colonel Frederick Van de Waele, the advisor Spaak had sent Tshombe in August and the man charged by Tshombe to mastermind the military overthrow of the People's Republic. By the end of October, the fourth and major force of the Van de Waele Plan was poised at Kongolo (see Map 2). Ahead of it were some 800 miles of rough road, jungle terrain, rivers, and the Popular Army. If the rebels were receiving effective help, to include mines and weapons to stop vehicles plus the training on how to use them, the Van de Waele Plan might be in for real trouble. On November 1, the force, commonly referred to as the "VdW Column," left Kongolo. The going was surprisingly easy.

The column, numbering about 700 men, was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Liégelois of the Belgian Army. In column order were: a scout element of mercenaries in two Ferret and three Seamia Vabis armored cars; three mercenary commando units, each numbering about forty men with an armored jeep and three 5-ton trucks; an ANC engineer platoon; and a company of Congolese infantry. The three mercenary commando units, commanded by Major Hoare, were the major strike force in the column. The Congolese company following behind was to occupy the towns and clean out pockets of resistance.

Jeeping along in the column was US Army Lieutenant Colonel Donald Rattan, a member of the Dodds Party at Bukavu, and his driver, a US Army sergeant. Their presence in the column was never reported by the press, which as Rattan recalled later, was a mystery to him. His job was liaison, and that assignment seemed strange too, as he had no radio mounted in his jeep. He did, however, have a portable Collins single sideband radio, if he could just find a power plug for it. As Rattan said, the column operated on a "shoestring": no spare vehicles; no spare parts; only limited communications; and no doctor. And what really worried him, accompanying the column like rolling fire bombs, the personnel trucks also carried the entire supply of ammunition, gas, and oil!

Late in the afternoon of the fourth, Hoare's mercenaries blasted their way into the nearly deserted center of Kibombo and fanned out to the city's outskirts. One patrol soon reported back

with the news that was most feared: the defenders, only moments before melting into the bush, had executed three Belgians.<sup>5</sup> No other Europeans were in town. Liégelois thought of the hundred or so Europeans in Kindu, 80 miles north. It was a special case. Kindu was a center of Popular Army recruiting and Olenga's home base, a political core of Lumumbaism, and 3 years before it had made world headlines as being the grisly scene of the murder and dismemberment of 13 Italian airmen.\* The decision was made—MOVE OUT—and the three commando units were on the road at dusk, hoping to push through the night and take Kindu by surprise the next day. It was well they did.

By mid-afternoon the next day the column reached the outskirts of Kindu, halted, and made another decision. Somehow all of Washington's restrictions and guidelines on the use of US aircraft were forgotten or overlooked, and B-26s and T-28s were called in to attack the city with rockets, bombs, and machineguns. Then the commandos quickly moved in, headed for the Lualaba River, and caught hundreds of Simbas trying to cross. More importantly, they also found about a hundred foreigners, mostly Belgians and Greeks, terrified but unharmed. Another 24 Belgians were found, all men, who had been selected for execution, stripped to their shorts, only to watch as their captors fled in confusion and terror at the beginning of the air attack.<sup>7</sup>

That night, one commando unit ferried across the mile-wide Lualaba and made a dawn dash 60 miles to Kalima. There the mercenaries rescued 94 more Europeans, including 48 Belgian priests imprisoned in their mission. They, too, felt they had been singled out for execution and that Hoare's "Wild Geese" had arrived in the nick of time.<sup>8</sup> Back in Kindu, Rattan found a power plug for his Collins radio and used it for the first and last time until reaching Stanleyville.

The plan now called for the VdW Column to halt at Kindu and there to be reinforced and resupplied for the drive to Stanleyville. The force of Liégelois with Hoare's three commando units would

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\*On 11 November 1961, 13 Italian airmen of the UN Force in the Congo flew into Kindu carrying scout cars for the Malayan contingent there. On the sixteenth they were seized by mutinous ANC troops reported to be supporters of Gizenga's secession: the airmen were shot, their bodies were dismembered, and some bodies were thrown into the Lualaba River. Subsequent investigation revealed that most of the bodies were sold in the Kindu market.

become Lima I, still serving as the lead strike force. Another element, called Lima II and composed of 900 Congolese infantry under a Belgian Army officer, was to be ferried by air from Kamina. It was to follow behind Lima I, occupy the towns and clean up the pockets. Van de Waele planned for the total force to move on Stanleyville as soon as possible. As he told Ambassador Godley in a meeting on the ninth, safety of the hostages lay in "maximum military forward motion." It was essential to move quickly to cut off rebel arms supplies. With this Godley was fully in accord.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the military logic, however, as viewed from Washington and Brussels, it was time for decisionmakers to take stock. Orders went out to halt the column. Van de Waele was called off to Brussels for consultations and Hoare, taking advantage of the halt, flew off to Durban for the very well-timed birth of his son. The column would not move for 2 weeks.

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There were reports that Olenga had been killed in Kindu. His Mercedes was found at the ferry site with a body, dressed as a general, lying dead beside it. But the residents in Stanleyville's Central Prison knew better:

*During the morning [November 10th] General Olenga briefly visited the prison but saw none of the Europeans. However, Olenga apparently left an order that Makaroff and Nothomb\* were to be moved from solitary confinement and returned to the cell containing the rest of the consular corps....*

*In the evening the Italian honorary consul, Mr. Massachesi, was personally brought to prison by Olenga. According to Massachesi, he is imprisoned because of the alleged involvement in the attack on Kindu.*

### **The Spaak Visit**

In Washington and Brussels it was becoming increasingly evident that the "Congo problem" was heading down a collision course. Some decisions had to be made. The VdW Column could

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\*The Stanleyville representative of the railroad company and the Belgian Consul, respectively.

with the news that was most feared: the defenders, only moments before melting into the bush, had executed three Belgians.<sup>5</sup> No other Europeans were in town. Liégelois thought of the hundred or so Europeans in Kindu, 80 miles north. It was a special case. Kindu was a center of Popular Army recruiting and Olenga's home base, a political core of Lumumbaism, and 3 years before it had made world headlines as being the grisly scene of the murder and dismemberment of 13 Italian airmen.\* The decision was made—MOVE OUT—and the three commando units were on the road at dusk, hoping to push through the night and take Kindu by surprise the next day. It was well they did.

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No record could be found of any formal meeting, but Spaak most probably met with Harriman, Ball, and Rusk, reviewed the situation, and discussed options. Spaak also apparently proposed the idea of a combined rescue operation. William Brubeck, White House representative on the Congo Working Group, remembers attending a reception for Spaak on the State Department's 8th floor, when Spaak's *Chef de Cabinet*, Etienne Davignon, told Brubeck: "If you give us the planes, we can do it with a battalion." This was the first Brubeck had heard of such a proposal.<sup>12</sup> At any rate, the idea of a combined operation was born, and Spaak returned to Brussels on the ninth to talk things over with Lefèvre.

McGeorge Bundy apparently did not attend any of the sessions with Spaak, for Brubeck wrote a memorandum to him on the ninth describing the "increasingly precarious" situation in Stanleyville and outlining the proposal for combined action. Brubeck recommended to Bundy that the President approve the basic idea for planning purposes, but with the specific understanding that any use of force would require decision by both governments.<sup>13</sup>

The next day Bundy, together with Dean Rusk, went to the LBJ Ranch where they joined McNamara and his Deputy, Cyrus Vance, in "talks" with the President. The front page of the *New York Times* on November 10 reported the gathering and some of the subjects under discussion—the budget, White House reorganization, establishing a viable civil government in Vietnam, and Russia's continued refusal to pay UN peacekeeping assessments. The article said that Rusk was expected to discuss Spaak's visit in connection with proposals concerning the NATO fleet. The Congo was never mentioned.

## Reconciliation

While Spaak was proposing military action, and probably finding support at least in Harriman, others in the crisis-handling chain were calling for another diplomatic effort. Gbenye had provided an entree. On November 5, the day Van de Waele's column took Kindu, Gbenye broadcast over Radio Stanleyville that because of "bombardments" carried out by foreigners, all Belgians and Americans were considered prisoners of war. This was nothing

new, just one more threat and another reason to hurry the column. But then Gbenye added that he would welcome Kenyatta's OAU commission to Stanleyville and encourage its efforts "to find an African solution to the Congo affair." Accordingly, Gbenye was instructing his Foreign Minister, Thomas Kanza, to contact Kenyatta in Nairobi concerning negotiations.<sup>14</sup> This was new, and encouraging to some.

Thomas Kanza was only 31, sophisticated, intelligent, opportunistic, and most important, known personally to Governor Williams, Wayne Fredericks, and some others in the Africa Bureau. He was the first Congolese to graduate from a university, one of 13 such graduates in the Congo at independence, and Lumumba had appointed him as the Congo's first ambassador to the United Nations. In 1962 he became chargé in London. Then his fortunes turned, partially because his father had been a bitter rival of Kasavubu during early political struggles in the Congo. So now he was down and out and Gbenye gave him a job. What was hoped for, again in the old African tradition, was to get all of the chiefs together for a palaver. And Kanza might provide the key.

The first step, and the hardest, was to get Kasavubu and Tshombe to encourage a spirit of negotiation. On November ninth, the Congo Working Group sent Ambassador Godley a proposed declaration that he should try to persuade Kasavubu to issue: calling upon all rebels to lay down their arms and join with their countrymen "in full freedom" to construct a great nation in peace and order; calling for a "national reconciliation . . . without bitterness, rancor, or reprisals;" guaranteeing the safety of all rebels who did lay down their arms; and calling for national elections to broaden the base of government. Tshombe, Godley was told, should send his personal representative to Nairobi to meet with Kanza and Kenyatta and invite the commission to come to Leopoldville. The declaration had been discussed with Spaak, who had agreed to it, and the Belgians were supposed to apply pressure through their diplomatic channels.<sup>15</sup> Instructions went out to US Ambassadors in "friendly" African capitals such as Addis Ababa, Lagos, and Lusaka to try to rally the support of their host country leaders.

Then Rusk, in one of his personal cables "from The Secretary," gave Godley special instructions. Rusk realized that there might be

a reluctance on the part of the Congo's leaders to "temporize" with the rebels—now that the military effort was proceeding well—but Godley was told "to make every effort to overcome such hesitancy." Godley should make clear to them that the "attitude" of the United States to future cooperation would be affected by their cooperation in these negotiations.<sup>16</sup> This was real hard-pressure diplomacy.

The next morning Godley cabled his views. He was pessimistic about getting either Kasavubu or Tshombe to make any offers to the rebels. Earlier, Tshombe had called on the rebels to arrest their leaders. The United States could not expect the elite of the central government to support pardons after the rebels had been engaged in the systematic killing of intellectuals, officials, and their friends and families throughout the eastern Congo. General elections in the Congo would not work; such elections would be by bloc voting by tribal groups and would prove nothing. The Congo's leaders would not accept observers from other African countries; they lacked confidence in the OAU and suspected their neighbors of plotting to get the Congo's riches. If pushed too hard, Godley indicated, now that the war was going their way, they might cut us off and thus hurt the chances of cooperation later on.<sup>17</sup>

As in the earlier maneuverings with the stand-down of US aircraft, the Ambassador had trouble delivering the Secretary's instructions. Somehow both Kasavubu and Tshombe seemed able to sense when diplomats were carrying portfolios that were pressure inducing and "face" threatening, and then to be conveniently in a sickbed or "out of town." On the sixteenth, 6 days after Godley had received Rusk's instructions and left them at the offices of the Congolese leaders, he finally got an answer—from Kasavubu. Kasavubu said that there was no question of the Congolese Government issuing the proposed declaration. Kasavubu was polite, Godley reported, but completely negative.<sup>18</sup> So much for reconciliation.

The negotiations for reconciliation did, however, bring one bit of encouraging news: on November 12, Jomo Kenyatta announced that he had appealed to rebel authorities not to mistreat foreign civilians and had received assurance that they were in no danger. The assurance was shortlived. Two days later, according to Radio Stanleyville, "Major" Paul Carlson was tried for spying by a war council tribunal and sentenced to death. He had supposedly been

defended by two Congolese "lawyers," and the American Consul had "intervened" so that an exchange of the other prisoners could now be arranged.<sup>19</sup> No one bothered to tell Carlson about his trial, or to tell Hoyt that he had intervened

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In the Central Prison it was just one more day—a little tougher than most

*We heard [on November 14th] from the chief trusty of the prison that the Leopoldville, Brussels and Brazzaville radios report the ANC is only 10 kilometers away from Stanleyville on the left bank. However, there is no confirmation of this and we considered it simple propaganda*

*At about 1730 Martin Kasongo came into our cell accompanied by three of the prison guards. Kasongo was very drunk and, beginning with Grinwis, he struck each of the thirteen prisoners with all his strength in the face. He hit the Belgian Vice Consul seven times [sic].\**

*At about 2100 President Gbenye himself arrived and asked if we had been mistreated. When the Belgian Consul described the attack, Gbenye simply left the prison. We learned from the prison director who remained behind that he, that is the prison director, had informed Gbenye of the incident*

### **The DRAGON ROUGE Plan**

As mentioned, this writer found no formal aide-memoire or other record of Spaak's offer to provide a battalion of troops as a rescue force for Stanleyville—with the United States flying them in. As Governor Harriman later recalled: "We must have discussed it here [in Washington], and not put it on paper."<sup>20</sup> Nor is there any record of the meeting at the LBJ Ranch, when Secretary Rusk and National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy arrived on November 10 and presented Spaak's offer to the President. But the next afternoon, Lieutenant General David Burchinal, Director of the Joint Staff, called US European Command Headquarters (USEUCOM) at Camp des Loges in Paris with instructions for USEUCOM to send three planners immediately to Brussels, where they were to report to the US Ambassador. It was then evening in Paris and Armistice Day.<sup>21</sup>

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\*Kasongo was later arrested and placed in solitary confinement

Brigadier General Russell Dougherty, US Air Force, was that evening a guest at the annual Marine Corps Ball when the call came through to him. As the USEUCOM Deputy Operations Officer (J3) for Plans, it was to be his show. At 4 the next morning he was on the road to Brussels—with a world atlas on his lap turned to the Congo page.

Arriving at the Embassy at 1100 hours, Dougherty met his two fellow planners, one from US Air Force Headquarters in Europe (USAFE), and the second an airborne expert from the US 8th Airborne Division.\* The three were joined by a representative from the Joint Chiefs of Staff,\*\* carrying verbal instructions from General Burchinal (or perhaps from the President himself?): "Keep it small; don't let it turn into a John Wayne operation; no pearl-handled pistols or wagons so loaded the mules can't pull them."<sup>22</sup> Ambassador MacArthur expressed much the same guidance, though perhaps not with the same colorful eloquence. After a protocol stop at the Belgian Foreign Ministry, the four planners were soon hard at work with their counterparts at the Belgian Defense General Headquarters on Place Dailly.

The American planners had some familiarity (informational intelligence) with the Congo, as USEUCOM had been involved on occasion in airlifting personnel and supplies to and from the Congo, especially during the UN days. USEUCOM Headquarters had also been an information addressee for STRICOM's contingency plans (GOLDEN HAWK and HIGH BEAM), which Dougherty had seen as USEUCOM's chief planner.

The Americans, however, could not match their counterparts' intimate knowledge, not only of the Congo, but also of Stanleyville. Colonel Robert Louvigny, head of the Belgian planning section, had commanded the airbase at Kamina, which he proposed as an ideal staging area. Colonel Charles Laurent, commander of the Belgian Paracommando Regiment, the unit selected for the operation, had parachuted into Stanleyville on an exercise. For good measure, Laurent brought along his sergeant-major, who had made some 3,000 parachute jumps, including several into Stanleyville. This experience, however, was certainly not true of all Laurent's troops.

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\*Lieutenant Colonel J. L. Gray and Captain B. F. Brashears, respectively

\*\*Colonel J. E. Dunn

His regiment was a training unit filled largely with 18- to 20-year-old conscriptees. The recruits in his 1st Battalion had had 10 ½ months of training; those in his 2d Battalion 5 ½ months; and those in his 3d Battalion had had only 2 weeks.<sup>43</sup> Obviously the 3d Battalion would not be going.

The planners in Brussels lacked the same basic operational knowledge that had plagued General Adams' planners at STRICOM: no good current intelligence existed of the situation in Stanleyville. They were planning in the dark without information of antiaircraft defenses, rebel strength and location in the city, or even of the location of the 800 or so hostages they were supposed to find and evacuate. So Dougherty sent a FLASH cable to Washington advising "discreet RECCE [reconnaissance] urgently needed."<sup>44</sup> The request was turned down. No one in the crisis handling machinery was going to authorize an airplane to fly over Stanleyville and risk triggering carnage among the "prisoners of war." The troops would have to go in almost blind with no air photos except for some practically useless oblique shots taken far on the outskirts of the city, no pre-assault reconnaissance, and no pathfinder teams to look over and stake out the drop and landing zones. No airborne operation had ever been planned with such restrictions.

Throughout the planning, the political hand of both governments was also evident. The planners' first draft, routing the operation by the most direct route through US Wheelus Air Force Base in Libya, was disapproved for political reasons. The planners were told that the operation was to be humanitarian only, to save "people in mortal danger," and not a collaboration with the ANC on retaking Stanleyville or fighting rebels. Any relation with the VdW Column, which the planners estimated might reach Stanleyville by November 22, was to be one of coordination, *uniquement*.

Nor was Dougherty to mention anything about existing US contingency plans. Ambassador MacArthur was told to impress upon the Belgians that our willingness to engage in joint planning was not indicative of the United States being "predisposed towards intervening militarily in [the] Congo." We were simply preparing for a contingency, which would be executed only after decision "at highest levels."<sup>45</sup> At one point it looked as though the British would join the planning group, but that hope ended after London's "second thoughts stemming from political considerations."<sup>46</sup>

Faced with the political guidelines, the planners then sat down to hash out the nuts and bolts of the military operation, which was complicated by, among many other things, the fact that the Belgians and the Americans involved had never before participated in a joint airborne exercise, nor had the Belgian paratroopers ever jumped from C-130 aircraft. They worked through the afternoon and evening of the twelfth and all day the thirteenth, when finally Louvigny and Dougherty put their signatures to a joint planning agreement and adjourned to work out their separate problems.

That night the Americans borrowed a room in the Embassy and wrote the plan in detail, in longhand. They worked all through the night. The morning of the fourteenth, Dougherty had the plan typed, left a copy with Ambassador MacArthur and a copy for the Belgians, and drove back to Paris where he briefed General Lyman Lemnitzer, the Commander-in-Chief of the European Command (CINCEUR).

Lemnitzer questioned only one thing. In the joint planning agreement, Louvigny and Dougherty had agreed that the United States would have operational responsibility for the joint command right up to the assault on the drop zone, when the Belgian commander would take over. Lemnitzer recommended that the Belgians should take over earlier, from the final staging area at Kamina. Once a decision was made to implement the plan and the planes and troops were airborne, someone had to make the GO/NO-GO and timing decision for the actual launch—after assessing the immediate conditions in and over Stanleyville. As Lemnitzer said, that man should be a Belgian: "He's the guy who may have to die."<sup>27</sup>

The plan, now known as USEUCOM OPLAN 319/64 (DRAGON ROUGE), 22 pages long, was cabled to the Joint Chiefs that night.<sup>28</sup> It was the same day Radio Stanleyville had announced Carlson's trial and death sentence.

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The plan called for a three-phased operation. In the first phase, 12 US C-130E aircraft would fly from their base at Evreux, France, to Kleine Brogel, Belgium, there to load 545 officers and ~~men~~ of the Paracommando Regiment, together with 8 armored jeeps and 12

AS-24 motorized tricycles, and fly them 4,134 nautical miles to Ascension Island in the middle of the South Atlantic (see Map 4). There would be one gas stop enroute at the US airbase at Moron in Spain.\* In the second phase, this force would be flown 2,405 miles from Ascension to Kamina. Van de Waele's headquarters and training base in Katanga. Kamina would be the staging area. The third phase would be the flight 550 miles north to Stanleyville and the assault. This flight was to be routed over Basoko, 100 miles downriver from Stanleyville, where it would rendezvous with a flight of B-26 aircraft of the Congolese Air Force. The B-26s would have the latest report on weather conditions in the Stanleyville area and escort the C-130s to the city (if the decision was still "GO"). The decisions of both governments were required for execution of each phase.

The assault was also planned in three phases. At 0600 hours local time on D-day, the 1st Battalion and Regimental Headquarters (320 men) would parachute from five C-130s onto the golf course adjacent to and northeast of the Stanleyville airfield, seize and defend the airfield, and clear it of any obstacles (see Map 3). Then two C-130s loaded with the eight armored jeeps would take off 30 minutes after the departure of the parachute force, fly directly to Stanleyville, and land on signal. Finally, after another 30 minutes, the last five C-130s, loaded with one company of the 2d Battalion, supplies, and spare parts, would take off for Stanleyville, land if possible, or air-drop men and materiel if necessary.

The heart of the assault plan was the clearing of the airfield to permit landing the eight armored jeeps, for following this, as General Dougherty wrote, the paratroopers would proceed into the city proper, using the jeeps as small tanks, to find and free the hostages.<sup>29</sup> This would be the plan's weakest link, for herein was a built-in time delay with the potential for fatal consequences.

There was also a question of command within the American command structure. The US aircraft were coming from General Lemnitzer's command (USEUCOM) and would be flying into Africa, which was General Adams' territorial responsibility (STRICOM). Therefore, Dougherty wrote into the plan that responsibility for

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\*A second gas stop at Las Palmas in the Canaries was planned and later cancelled as being unnecessary.

command of the US airlift force would pass from Lemnitzer to Adams once the force arrived at Kamina.

OPLAN 319/64 and its Belgian counterpart plan were now subjected to review "at highest levels" in both governments. One of the first to comment was General Adams. Earlier, getting word of the planning sessions going on in Brussels, Adams had requested JCS permission to send two representatives to join the group. After all, Africa was in his area. The Joint Chiefs vetoed his request saying that dispatch of his planners was unnecessary on the grounds that the operation being planned was purely Belgian. United States participation was limited to aircraft, which General Lemnitzer had been directed to provide because he had them in Europe.<sup>30</sup>

While this was certainly true, if somewhat exaggerated as "purely Belgian," the real reason may have been more pointed. As one official close to the action told the writer, there were crisis managers in both the State Department and the JCS who were afraid that with STRICOM representatives in Brussels the plan might reflect Adams' "overkill tendencies." To them, the General was still "Big Hawk" and they did not want DRAGON ROUGE to be as big an operation as HIGH BEAM. Thus, when STRICOM received a copy of the plan, it was natural for Adams to be somewhat incensed by the provision in the plan that he should take over command of the airlift force at Kamina. He recommended to the JCS that since his command had not been permitted to participate in the planning, that CINCEUR (Lemnitzer) should retain operational responsibility for the airlift force throughout the entire operation. The Joint Chiefs disapproved.\*

General Adams had other objections of more far-reaching significance. He thought that the C-130s in the initial assault, scheduled according to the plan to make three passes over the golf course to discharge their 320 troops, and flying 120 mph at 1,200 feet altitude, would be "dribbling" the force in and making them sitting ducks for rebel ground fire. It was also unlikely that with stops in Spain, Ascension, and Kamina, that surprise could be achieved, making the force even more vulnerable. Finally, and

\*General Adams later recommended, and the JCS approved, that as long as operational command was to pass to him, that this be done when the force arrived at Ascension instead of at Kamina—the thought being that the force might have to go directly to Stanleyville from Ascension.

hitting upon the plan's weakest link, there was too much time between H-hour (0600), the subsequent arrival of the armored jeeps 30 minutes later, and the first probes into the city for the rescue—too much time for “spiriting away the hostages.”

To Adams the best chance for success lay in a “vigorous execution” of the Van de Waele operation, coordinated with his GOLDEN HAWK operation, and with his HIGH BEAM forces on standby just in case.<sup>32</sup> To General Adams, no doubt it seemed better to overkill than to fail. Handwritten on the margin of the White House copy of his cable was a note saying that Harriman had talked to the Pentagon about Adams' comments, that the Pentagon would work things out with Adams, and that there was “no substance of importance involved.”

In the meantime, the “Old Stan Hands” in the Congo Working Group were also finding some basic flaws and omissions in DRAGON ROUGE. First, what ripple effect would the operation have on the safety and security of smaller pockets of foreigners elsewhere in the Congo, and how did the Belgians see giving them assistance?<sup>33</sup> Then, with provisions for getting the DRAGON ROUGE force into Stanleyville, no provisions were made for getting it out. To be defensible to the public and the world and minimize political and military overtones, the operation must be confined to humanitarian evacuation of hostages and early withdrawal of troops. Finally, the plan mentioned redeploying the C-130s back to Europe via Wheelus. This was impossible, as none of the African countries which the planes would overfly would be likely to grant clearances, “even if we were prepared to request them.”<sup>34</sup>

On November 16, the Joint Chiefs told General Lemnitzer to be prepared on short notice to send planners back to Brussels. And this time, General Adams would also be invited to participate.

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Shortly after the JCS alert notice arrived, General Dougherty was on his way back to Brussels—ostensibly this time on leave with his wife. Needless to say, Mrs. Dougherty saw little of her husband during the next few days.

Early the morning of the eighteenth in Brussels, Dougherty received guidance from the JCS that he *could* plan additional

rescue operations with the Belgians with the understanding that this would not commit the United States to providing or employing US forces for additional operations. He *should*, however, work out details for the withdrawal of the Belgian force from Stanleyville and its earliest redeployment to Belgium.<sup>35</sup>

The joint planners met again for 2 days and planned the details of three additional operations, the first one of which could be mounted starting 48 hours after DRAGON ROUGE. They listed three cities as being most critical and assigned priority code names as follows (see Map 2): Bunia (DRAGON BLANC); Paulis (DRAGON NOIR); and Watsa (DRAGON VERT). On the twenty-first, General Dougherty cabled his "Supplemental Planning for Phase Two, OPLAN 319/64" to the JCS, and his job was done.<sup>36</sup>

But this is getting ahead of the story.

### **From Evreux to Ascension**

OPLAN 319 had barely arrived in Washington when the Belgians started pushing for action. On the morning of November 15, Ambassador MacArthur cabled Washington that Spaak had just called him and recommended that the DRAGON ROUGE force be moved to Ascension on the seventeenth. Van de Waele's column, which had been in Kindu for 10 days, was scheduled to move again on the nineteenth. This would be the period of maximum danger, Spaak felt, when hostages might be slaughtered should the rebels panic before the advancing and increasingly visible column.<sup>37</sup> It was quick-decision time, Sunday, and the hottest document in town was OPLAN 319. The President was enroute to Washington that day after spending 2 weeks at the Ranch.

The answer went back to MacArthur 6 hours later, in a cable composed by Harriman. It was loaded with strings and reservations. The Ambassador was told to assure Spaak that the United States wanted to be "as helpful as we can in *Belgian* efforts to assure safety of the foreign community," and therefore we would alert our C-130s to be ready to load on the seventeenth. *But*, before giving final approval, we wanted Spaak's "considered judgment" that the advanced pre-positioning was necessary. Assembling and loading the force, obtaining flight clearances, the gas stop in Spain, all risked leaking the operation. Harriman pointed out further that risk

would escalate the longer the time lapsed between departure and deployment. The less time spent at the forward position, the less time there would be for a leak "to precipitate a situation *which might force us to implement the plan.*"<sup>38</sup>

It was the same dilemma that had plagued crisis managers after creating GOLDEN HAWK and HIGH BEAM, and Harriman wondered if Spaak and Lefèvre had considered it with DRAGON ROUGE: having created a plan to meet a possible crisis, no head of state could afford politically to be caught with the plan unused in the event the crisis occurred. The act of moving the force to Ascension might reveal that there was a plan, possibly worsen the crisis, and force the plan's execution.

Certainly one of the factors promoting early pre-positioning of DRAGON ROUGE at Ascension was Radio Stanleyville's announcement on November 14 of Carlson's "trial." Later, the rebels announced that his execution had been set for November 16, and then there was silence. All through that critical Monday the sixteenth, there was no word of Carlson's fate.

It is interesting, therefore, that when McGeorge Bundy went for Johnson's "final approval" on the President's first morning back in the Oval Office, no mention was made in his "Memorandum for the President" of the pros and cons of pre-positioning DRAGON ROUGE vis-a-vis the threat to Carlson. He may have assumed Carlson to be already dead, which would have indicated an irrational act by the rebel leaders, and the assumption could be made that there could be further such acts—for sure, significant information to pass on to a President.

At any rate, Bundy pointed out to the President that he, Defense, and State agreed that pre-positioning was necessary (apparently no other agencies were consulted). Then he wrote some interesting justification, reflecting not only the old guidance to keep the lid on, but also new thinking, now that the Belgians were involved, that we should push them to the forefront of the stage and downplay our own role. As Bundy put it: it was best to let the Belgians take the lead on this decision; they know the Congolese better and their nationals in the Congo outnumber ours 30 to 1; the possible cost of opposing Spaak's recommendation might be greater than the cost of concurrence in terms of future Belgian

support and cooperation; hopefully, the rescue operation would not be necessary and further movement would continue to require the President's consent.<sup>39</sup> Nowhere in the memorandum was there any reference to Harriman's concern that once the rebels learned that DRAGON ROUGE forces had left Belgium, a situation might be precipitated which would force the President to implement the plan.

In the margin of Bundy's memorandum was his handwritten note: "P agreed to this and I told Brubeck."<sup>40</sup> That afternoon, the sixteenth, a FLASH message went from the Congo Working Group to Ambassador MacArthur telling him to inform Spaak that the President had agreed to pre-position DRAGON ROUGE at Ascension on the seventeenth, but that any movement beyond Ascension would require joint decision.<sup>40</sup> Almost simultaneously a message went from the JCS to General Lemnitzer in Paris ordering him to execute that portion of OPLAN 319 for the positioning of forces on Ascension. Time was felt to be suddenly so critical that this action was taken 9 hours before the Joint Chiefs were to formally approve the DRAGON ROUGE plan itself.<sup>41</sup> Apparently if the Joint Chiefs were consulted at all in the decision, it was informally and personally—perhaps one of the times Governor Harriman was thinking about when he told the writer how closely he had worked with General Wheeler during the Stanleyville crisis ("He came to my office frequently").

In Europe, especially at Rhein-Main Air Force Base in Germany, headquarters of US Air Force Europe (USAFE), "close hold" planning and briefings were going on from the time the three US planners returned home from Brussels on the fourteenth. By the evening of the fifteenth, Colonel Burgess Gradwell, Commander of the 464th Troop Carrier Wing at Evreux, France, knew there was "something hot brewing" that would involve 14 to 16 C-130E aircraft from his command. The next day he was told to report to USAFE Headquarters, and late that night he returned home with his orders, which he could disclose only to his deputy.

The next afternoon, the seventeenth, fourteen aircraft from Gradwell's wing took off for Kleine Brogel, Belgium: one aircraft for carrying spare parts and mechanics; twelve for Belgian

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<sup>39</sup>"P" referred to President Johnson.

paratroopers and their equipment; and one "Talking Bird." By 2000 hours on the eighteenth, all of his aircraft, with 545 Belgian paratroopers aboard, had closed at Ascension.<sup>42</sup> Also on board, in a US Air Force flight suit hurriedly purchased from the US Air Attaché in Brussels, was John Clingerman, who had been Mike Hoyt's predecessor as US Consul in Stanleyville. It would be Clingerman's job to brief the Belgian paratroopers on the most likely whereabouts and hangouts of the Americans in the city—if in fact they were still there, or alive.

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On the same morning the Belgians and Americans were preparing to fly off to Ascension, the Congolese Chief of Intelligence told Ambassador Godley that he had good recent information that the American officials in Stanleyville were being better treated "than heretofore." The information, though accurate to a point, was soon out of date.<sup>43</sup>

*At 1000 [on November 18] an officer came to our cell and ordered all Americans to come immediately to the guard office. We became very worried at this point because from 0900 we could hear the noise of a large crowd near the prison and we assumed that this had some connection with us because of the increasing anti-American announcements made by Radio Stanleyville during the last few days. We had also heard strange rumors to the effect Gbenye had accused Dr. Carlson of being an "American Major" and a "spy."*

*A list of our names—the five members of the Consulate, Dr. Carlson, and Snyder and Bergman†—was made up by the officer and we were taken outside the prison where there was a small jeep (covered) and a Volkswagon. Six of us were put in the jeep and the other two in the Volkswagon. We were then driven slowly to the Lumumba Monument three blocks away, observing that on either side of the street there were large crowds screaming anti-American slogans. We arrived in front of the Lumumba Monument and the two persons in the Volkswagon were put in the jeep with us. The entire area around the Monument was filled with people and the Post Office roof and balconies were equally jammed.*

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\*A C-130 aircraft specially equipped for long-range communications

†Jon Snyder and Gene Bergman. These two Mennonite teachers were at the University serving in the PAX program for conscientious objectors in lieu of military service. They were imprisoned shortly after Carlson.

*The jeep was parked in the street just before the Monument and around the jeep were 5 or 6 armed Simbas. These Simbas were meant to guard us from the highly excited mob, but this did not prevent bold individuals from the crowd pressing around the jeep and poking their hands into the vehicle. Our beards were pulled and our faces scratched with fingernails.*

*Throughout the 45 minutes the display lasted we were told by members of the mob that we were to be killed with machetes and then certain parts of our bodies were to be eaten. We were all accused of being American mercenaries captured in Kindu by the Popular Army. The crowd around the jeep was most interested in the American major but they also tried to decide who was the general, who was the colonel, and who was just the adjutant and so on. Some of us were jabbed with pins and knives and burned with cigarettes. Mr. Parkes was hit over the eye with a rifle barrel and began to bleed heavily.*

*We were at the height of this mauling and verbal abuse [when we were] ordered to leave the jeep and line up in single file just before the steps to the Monument. We emerged from the jeep and the crowd screamed and screamed. It turned out, however, that instead of being set upon by machetes, General Olenga had arrived. The General spoke a few words to our guard and we were suddenly ordered back into the jeep but not before the General knocked one officer down who objected to the fact we were not [to] be publicly slaughtered.*

*We were then told by the driver that we were to be taken to see Gbenye at the Palace. While we were waiting for someone to find the key to the jeep, we noted Martin Kasongo, Oscar Sengha, and various other officers known to us looking into the vehicle. As they [sic] key to the jeep could not be located, the Simbas who were in our guard as well as some of the civilians pushed the jeep all the way back to the vicinity of the prison. There were heavy crowds on both sides of the road hurrying along next to the jeep calling out "Manteka!" "Manteka!" which simply means that a victim is to become a corpse. After about half an hour of this continued abuse, the key to the jeep was finally found and we were driven to Gbenye's Palace where we arrived just at noon. On the way to the Palace, the driver of the jeep told us that we had "been saved at the last minute" because he was certain the mob was almost out of control and we were about to be cut down in front of the Monument.*

*When we arrived at the Palace we found a crowd equally as large if not larger than that in front of the Monument but much better organized. Of perhaps four thousand people, it was broken up into groups of youth, nationalist women, provincial deputies, and so on. We were told to get down from the jeep and to line up in a single file. We stood for a few moments surrounded by the crowd while photographers, one of whom was a Portuguese, took pictures of us. Then we were moved through the crowd, still in single file, and protected by armed Simbas, until we reached a balcony of the Palace where Gbenye, using a public address system, was making a speech in French.*

*Arriving in front of Gbenye, an open space was cleared and we were pushed into double file. The white photographer took several more photographs of us and Congolese photographers were also active. The crowd pushed up on either side of our double file and some of the Simbas among them held arms against our heads and bodies. From what we could gather from the speech Gbenye was giving in French and in a later, much longer speech in Lingala, Gbenye was announcing the condemnation of "Major Carlson" to death by a military tribunal. Gbenye stated that Carlson's execution had been scheduled for the following Monday or Tuesday and would be carried out unless undefined "negotiations" being conducted by Thomas Kanza and Prime Minister Jomo Kenyatta in Nairobi were successful from the Stanleyville regime's viewpoint.*

*Gbenye did not have a quiet audience and did not obtain its complete attention so far as we could determine, except at one point when the crowd, crying its insistence on the immediate execution of all the American mercenaries captured in Kindu, was told by Gbenye that the Popular Army and the Revolutionary Government must support the traditional program begun by Lumumba. At the name Lumumba the crowd became very quiet and Gbenye said that the program of Lumumba involved African unity, and that through African unity the negotiations that were being carried on in Nairobi with Prime Minister Kenyatta would gain for the Revolutionary Government its complete triumph. Gbenye, however, to satisfy his audience was obliged to promise that if the Popular Army did not triumph all the American mercenaries, that is we eight, would be executed.*

*During this speech the first burgomaster held a loaded automatic weapon against the head of Mr Houle, this*

*apparently indicated to the crowd that Houle was the famous Major Carlson [It is interesting to note that none of the eight Americans were identified individually]*

*This experience lasted for approximately three quarters of an hour. Then we were marched back to the jeep and returned to prison, arriving at 10 minutes to one. The prison director gratuitously complimented us on what he heard had been our "dignified bearing" at the Monument*

Unknown to the eight Americans who were undergoing their ordeal in front of the crowds at Lumumba Square, earlier that morning of the eighteenth, Radio Stanleyville had received an appeal from President Kenyatta to spare Carlson's life "on humanitarian grounds." Kenyatta was acting on an earlier appeal by Dean Rusk to intercede as the Chairman of the OAU Special Commission. Also unknown to the Americans, 40 minutes after they had been returned to prison, shaken but alive, Radio Stanleyville had answered Kenyatta: out of respect for Kenyatta's plea and pending the outcome of discussions to be held by Foreign Minister Kanza in Nairobi, "Major" Carlson's execution had been postponed to November 23.<sup>44</sup>

### **The "Long-Range Airborne Training Exercise"**

In the message to Ambassador MacArthur telling him that the President had approved Spaak's recommendation to pre-position DRAGON ROUGE on Ascension, concern was expressed that the cover story to conceal the move was "so transparent as to blow secrecy."<sup>45</sup> In one short paragraph on page 15 of OPLAN 319, the joint planners had written that in case of compromise or unavoidable disclosure, the move to Ascension was to be described as a "joint US-Belgian long-range airborne training exercise." Troops, of course, would not be told where they were going until they were isolated in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean (i.e., on Ascension), and in the flight planning annex to the plan, aircraft were scheduled to trail singly at 15-minute intervals, land in Spain in darkness, and keep their doors shut while on the ground. But it was obvious something more had to be worked out—such as the cover story for the Normandy Invasion—so logical as not to arouse suspicion as to why Americans and Belgians were suddenly engaged in a joint "training exercise."

Accordingly, the Joint Chiefs told General Lemnitzer to work out a cover and deception plan and, in the panic of the late hour, the Congo Working Group began working on its own plan as well. Lemnitzer forwarded his plan to the JCS on the sixteenth. Early the next morning, his staff received the Congo Working Group plan, with no indication that it had JCS concurrence or that the Joint Chiefs were even among the addressees. But time was running out and there were too many people involved in too many different places. The result, of course, was confusion as people scrambled about for diplomatic overflight and landing clearances, tried to distinguish fictitious plans from the real thing, and cancelled whatever was scheduled covering the period of the "training exercise." Confusion in a military cover and deception plan can mean disaster. Happily for DRAGON ROUGE, the enemy to be deceived was not of the caliber of the German General Staff.

Colonel Laurent's 1st Battalion, which was to be the major element of the DRAGON ROUGE force, was scheduled to march in a parade in Brussels on the fifteenth. It was decided to let them march. One company was also on guard duty at the Royal Palace. It was decided to replace them on the sixteenth, a day early. Leaves and passes were cancelled and reserve personnel were called to active duty—something normally not done for a training exercise. One reserve officer who was called happened to be a journalist. Also the British, French, and Spanish had to be consulted, and because of the international significance of the operation, such consultation had to go all the way to the top for even as simple a thing as an overflight clearance. Somebody in the Congo Working Group jumped the gun by requesting US Embassies in Nigeria and Niger to get overflight clearances from their host countries for the return flight (at that point scheduled to go to Wheelus). Ambassador Godley, an information addressee for the message, caught the security threat and quickly cabled the US Embassies in Lagos and Niamey to hold action pending clarification.<sup>46</sup>

In all the confusion Colonel Gradwell and his US 464th Troop Carrier Wing took off from Evreux 1 hour late and without clearance for the operation from the French Government. At Kleine Brogel, he had orders to load the Belgians and await further instructions. There were no further orders so he called the US Embassy. The Embassy called the Commanding General of USAFE, who was sick in bed and did not know details of the plan. Finally, it took a

telephone call from Ambassador MacArthur to the White House to unscramble the situation, with an additional delay of 2 ½ hours.<sup>47</sup> Clearance for the first aircraft to penetrate Spanish airspace was received only minutes before the aircraft flew over the Pyrenees. In the meantime, reporters all over Europe were asking questions, and embassies and war ministries were trying to give the same answers. It was hopeless.

Finally, late in the afternoon of the twentieth, with front-page articles and headlines about the "joint training exercise" appearing in Brussels, Paris, and London, and with rumors flying everywhere, Spaak felt forced to announce that his paratroopers "with the aid of the American planes" were on *Ile d'Ascension*. The United States and Belgium have considered it "their duty . . . to take preparatory measures in order to be able to effect, if necessary, a humanitarian rescue operation."<sup>48</sup> Washington and the Congo Working Group were caught by surprise, as was an American diplomat in Leopoldville, who later recalled: "This really had us sh—ing."

The Congo Working Group, 6 hours behind Brussels on the clock, followed with a similarly worded release, which made the evening news—changing the measures taken from "preparatory" to "precautionary." The concern now, of course, was not only what the rebels would do, but also what might happen to Americans in other capitals of the world.

The first order of business was to get a message to "All Posts" telling US Ambassadors to contact the "highest available officials" in their host countries, stressing that the joint force was precautionary, nonpolitical, and would be used only if necessary; was strictly humanitarian and would be limited to evacuation; and would be employed only on request of the Congolese Government. They were also told, as renewed guidance to downplay the US role, to emphasize that the United States was providing "only airlift." And for ambassadors in Africa: "Without showing public concern, you should quietly take such preliminary emergency and evacuation planning steps as may be necessary."<sup>49</sup> There were those Old Africa Hands in the Congo Working Group who remembered back to July 1960, the violence following the mutiny of the *Force Publique*, and the world outcry when Belgian paratroopers returned to the Congo to rescue their countrymen.;

In Stanleyville, far from the newspapers and communiques, the Simbas under General Olenga had been told so many stories about the "thousands" of Americans (and later Belgians) fighting against them, that one more story would add little to their concern. And besides, where was *Ile d'Ascension*? In fact, at about the same time that Spaak was clearing up the matter of the "training exercise," things got suddenly better for the "prisoners of war" in Stanleyville.

*At 1900 [on November 20] the Simba guards from the Residence Victoria arrived and called out all the Americans and Belgians remaining in the Prison (that is 35 persons), arranged us in file, and marched us with our possessions to the Residence Victoria. Arriving 15 minutes later at the Victoria we found the lobby jammed with Belgians. We were informed by the captain of the guard that we were shortly to be moved outside the city to various strategic spots as a measure to protect the city from bombings by American and Belgian planes.*

### **The GO-PUNCH Procedures**

In addition to concern expressed in Washington over the "transparency" of the DRAGON ROUGE cover plan, there was also concern over the mechanics of how the decision would be signaled to launch the DRAGON ROUGE assault on Stanleyville—or call it back, if once ordered and the decision reversed. The joint planners had agreed that both governments would have to approve the execution of each phase—as both did on November 17 to move the force to Ascension. The announcement on the sixteenth of Carlson's sentence of execution indicated to Washington that the leaders in Stanleyville were becoming perhaps increasingly irrational. Colonel Van de Waele had returned to Kindu and was scheduled to move his column again on the nineteenth, so time for quick decision might be near at hand—perhaps even to launch DRAGON ROUGE straight into Stanleyville without first staging at Kamina. The mechanics for making this decision were something crisis managers wanted well spelled out. What did the Belgians think?

Ambassador MacArthur checked with the Belgian Government and found some interesting thinking—interesting, that is, from the point of view of American officials overseas accustomed

to tight reins from Washington. Spaak planned to task Colonel Van de Waele, the man closest to the action, to determine if and when the DRAGON ROUGE assault should be made. If Van de Waele felt the operation was necessary, he would communicate his recommendation to the Belgian Ambassador (DeKerchove) in Leopoldville, who would advise Godley, and Godley would then inform both Brussels and Washington using the code word "PUNCH." If the US Government concurred, we should transmit "PUNCH" to the DRAGON ROUGE force over our military channels and the assault would be initiated. If the United States did not concur, we should ask Brussels "for further consultations."<sup>50</sup>

This was much too loose for Washington, though we could not, of course, question the Belgian Government's decision to delegate its authority to a military commander in the field. Godley was also concerned. As he pointed out, the need to do something quickly in Stanleyville might be recognized by a variety of sources other than Van de Waele—himself, for example. Van de Waele might not be able to communicate with Leopoldville, and Lieutenant Colonel Rattan, riding along in the column with his powerless Collins radio, probably could not be of help.<sup>51</sup>

In the Congo Working Group Brubeck and Palmer drafted the American position, which Governor Harriman approved. This became the accepted procedure for both governments. First of all, only US channels would be used for communication of decisions and consultations. A second code word "GO" was incorporated, which was to be used by the originator of the recommendation to launch the assault. If a "GO" originated:

- In Leopoldville, after agreement of both American and Belgian officials, Godley would cable "GO" simultaneously to Brussels and Washington; if Washington concurred, the JCS would cable "PUNCH" to the DRAGON ROUGE force;
- In Brussels, upon instigation of the Belgian Government, MacArthur would cable "GO" to Washington; again, if Washington concurred, the JCS would cable "PUNCH" to the DRAGON ROUGE force;
- In Washington, the Congo Working Group would cable "GO" to Brussels and Leopoldville (for transmittal to the Belgian Embassy), accept "PUNCH" from either, and then the JCS would "PUNCH" the DRAGON ROUGE force as before.

If there was nonconcurrence in any of these three sequences, procedures called for immediate consultations.<sup>52</sup> The reader will note, however, that in all the above procedures, the final communication to execute the assault lay in Washington: in the Joint Chiefs' cabling of "PUNCH" to the DRAGON ROUGE force. For sure, DRAGON ROUGE was no longer the "purely Belgian" operation the JCS foresaw when they told General Adams he could not send planners to Brussels. Colonel Laurent, with no "Talking Bird" communications aircraft at his disposal, had to assume that a "PUNCH" coming over an American radio from the JCS was with the approval of Brussels or Leopoldville. However, General Lemnitzer and OPLAN<sup>319</sup> had left the very final decision with him, as the commander of the "guys who may have to die." Only Laurent could send his troops hurling through the air against an enemy no one, because of the restrictions on intelligence gathering, knew much about.

Later, as decision-time approached and crisis managers worried, as they do especially before a decision with so many intangibles, the words "BLUE FISH" were added to the operational vocabulary. Coming from Brussels, Washington, Leopoldville, or from Laurent looking down on Stanleyville from the lead assault aircraft, BLUE FISH meant cancel the whole thing. This the reader can forget.

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There were a few alarming reports coming in to indicate that, if the Popular Army thus far had not put up much of a show against the Van de Waele column, the situation could change for the worse the closer the column got to Stanleyville. There was a reliable report that an Ilyushin-18 aircraft with Algerian registry had been sighted in Arua, Uganda, unloading arms. Trucks were then seen moving toward the Congolese border with the cargo.<sup>53</sup> In a little village near Kindu, Hoare's mercenaries found Chinese Communist ammunition left behind by fleeing rebel troops. They also found evidence that English-speaking and Spanish-speaking foreigners might be advising rebel units in combat.\* It was high time for action.

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\*Cuban pilots flying the B-26s and T-28s frequently heard their countrymen talking over the rebel radio network, and on occasion "their" and "our" Cubans engaged in friendly chats. Several months after the Stanleyville rescue, the diary of a Cuban radio operator was found near Uvira—wherein he described his travels from Havana to Moscow, Dar es Salaam, and across Lake Tanganyika to the Eastern Congo.<sup>54</sup>

The VdW Column left Kindu on schedule on November 19. The next day, about the same time Spaak was telling the world about *l'le d'Ascension*, Hoare's commandos fought their way across the Loma River north of Punia—180 miles from Stanleyville.

### **From Ascension to Kamina**

No sooner had Spaak made the announcement on the twentieth that the DRAGON ROUGE force was on Ascension, than he began soundings with Washington to move the force to Kamina. After all, the secret was out, so why hold the troops on Ascension any longer? Kamina and/or Stanleyville were still 8 to 9 flying hours away. Based on the planning decision that the force should drop at 0600 hours Stanleyville time on any given day, counting flying hours, time to process GO-PUNCH decisions, and troop reaction time, General Adams felt it would take about 2 days between a decision in Washington and the dropping of the first paratrooper over the Stanleyville golf course.<sup>55</sup> The VdW Column was moving well, the troops on Ascension were rested after their long flight from Europe, and the voices from Stanleyville were becoming increasingly shrill.

Then on the twentieth, the following messages were received in the Congo Working Group:

- At 1135 hours from Leopoldville: in an obviously dictated message, Hoyt reported all Americans still alive but in danger; Carlson condemned to death; the Revolutionary Government desirous of initiating negotiations before it is too late; and "in case of delay I say for myself and my compatriots, goodbye."<sup>56</sup>
- At 1239 hours from Bujumbura: Radio Stanleyville broadcast that "if imperialist forces do not lay down their arms before 48 hours, we will not answer for the lives of foreigners whom we now hold as prisoners of war"; and in a second broadcast 45 minutes later, this time a declaration by Gbenye himself: "At the first attack on Stanleyville, Major Carlson will be executed following the will of the people."

<sup>55</sup>Ambassador Dumont concluded that Carlson was probably already dead. Dumont had talked with a Congolese youth who reported hearing a broadcast in Lingala announcing that Carlson had been executed and his "body burned because Congolese people would not allow it to sully Congolese soil."<sup>55</sup>

Late on the afternoon of the twentieth, and despite the threats implied in the messages, Ball, Harriman, and Vance met and decided against moving DRAGON ROUGE that night. In a "Pass to Spaak" message to Brussels, they outlined their thinking: though rebel propaganda was increasingly strident, it appeared to be aimed at prompting discussions; moving to Kamina would shorten the lead time, but the move would probably be quickly known; the situation was serious and becoming more so as Van de Waele approached Stanleyville; but perhaps he would move rapidly and decisively enough to preclude the need for DRAGON ROUGE.

In short, it seemed to be another "HOLD—TOO HARD" decision. The three reported that they would meet again at 1030 hours the next morning, "with the inclination to feel" that it would be better to move directly to Stanleyville rather than pre-position at Kamina.<sup>58</sup> That night, McGeorge Bundy cabled the President, who was again at the Ranch,<sup>\*</sup> reporting what had happened during the day and the plan to meet again the next morning. Bundy told Johnson that he and Ball were "cautious," Harriman was "marginally activist," and that all would be affected by Spaak's judgment. Vance's thinking (as well as the Pentagon's) was not mentioned.<sup>59</sup>

Spaak's "judgment" came in late that same night: to move to Kamina as quickly as possible. Shortly after midnight in the Congo Working Group, Ambassador Palmer, no doubt after making some hurried phone calls around Washington and to Texas, drafted "preliminary reactions" to Spaak's recommendation: deployment to Kamina without quick follow-on deployment to Stanleyville would cause loss of surprise and possible panic among the rebels, which could outweigh the advantage gained in reaction time; also, and a new thought, this might cause the rebels to move the hostages from town, thereby complicating the rescue.<sup>60</sup>

No details of the meeting the next morning (the twenty-first) were found, but apparently Ball, Harriman, and Vance overcame their preliminary reactions against moving the force to Kamina. To help them in making their decision, two FLASH messages arrived from Leopoldville about the time they were meeting.

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<sup>\*</sup>On November 20, President Johnson spoke at his alma mater, Southwest Texas State College at San Marcos, Texas, where he launched his Great Society program. He returned to the Ranch that afternoon to continue his "working vacation." Dean Rusk was also there.

The first message reported an intercept from Radio Stanleyville to Kenyatta: all the people in Stanleyville had decided to eat ("a dévorer") all the prisoners if further bombings occurred, and burn all prisoners in their houses if the White House did not engage in negotiations before Tuesday (the twenty-fourth). Godley worried that the crude threats and primitive French used by the speaker indicated that the rebel leaders had fled Stanleyville, leaving the town in the hands of the *jeunesse*.<sup>61</sup>

The second message contained Godley's further reflections and recommendations. We must assume, he reported, that Stanleyville was slipping into the hands of "barbaric elements"; no one could be sure what they would do. If the United States did not act, Godley felt, and the hostages were massacred, "we will be in terrible trouble." He recommended launching DRAGON ROUGE immediately.<sup>62</sup>

About noon a call went from George Ball to the US Embassy in Brussels, telling Ambassador MacArthur to notify Spaak that the United States concurred in moving DRAGON ROUGE to Kamina "soonest" and that the JCS had issued the necessary instructions.<sup>63</sup> On Ascension, where command of the DRAGON ROUGE force had now passed to General Adams, the lead aircraft ("CHALK 1") took off at 1937 hours, to be followed by the other aircraft at 10-minute intervals. By 1000 hours local time on the twenty-second, DRAGON ROUGE was on the ground at Kamina—2 ½ hours away from Stanleyville. In Brussels, Washington, and Leopoldville the DRAGON ROUGE players held their breaths for the news leak they were sure would come—but strangely never did.

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On the twenty-first, about the same time that the JCS was sending the order to move the DRAGON ROUGE force from Ascension to Kamina, Hoyt and his fellow prisoners in Stanleyville again thought their execution time had come.

*At 1545 [on November 21] all persons on the first floor apartments of the Victoria were suddenly ordered to come down into the lobby without luggage or possessions of any kind. All of these people, including the Belgian and American Consuls and Vice Consuls were loaded into a bus and a truck—both of which incidentally were of American manufacture—the*

*truck being part of American military aid to the ANC captured by the Simbas. We were not told where we were going except in the direction of the Tshopo River. This naturally caused great distress as, like the Lumumba Monument, the Tshopo River is an area in which mass executions are carried out. However after driving across the bridge over the Tshopo River and on into the country it became clear that something else was planned for us. We finally learned from one of our guards that we were being taken to Banalia, a small city northwest of Stanleyville, because the ANC led by American and Belgian troops were pushing on Stanleyville from the south. (It was clearly the intention of the authorities that we be kept as hostages behind their lines for the purposes of negotiation.) We were also informed by our guards that the rest of the Belgians and Americans in the Residence Victoria, including all women and children, would be brought to Banalia.*

*The bus in which we were riding kept breaking down however and by dusk we had only gone 12 kilometers from Stanleyville. The officer commanding the guard then decided that we would have to spend the night in a native village on the road and after much confusion all of the passengers, some 72 odd except for some of the older men who remained on the bus, were crowded into a very small Congolese mud and wattle house where there was just enough room for all of us to squat on the floor.*

*At 2130 that evening the new colonel came to the village. Calling for the American and Belgian Consuls by name, he informed them that all of us were to return to Stanleyville and that the Consuls and Vice Consuls must go on the first truck. The Colonel remained behind and spoke to those people who remained on the bus, and according to these persons he was quite friendly.*

But this again is slightly ahead of the story.

### **The "Authorization" to Intervene**

On the evening of November 17, as the DRAGON ROUGE force was moving from Kleine Brogel to Ascension, Governor Harriman was overseeing the drafting of a cable to Brussels. The message had this rather apprehensive introduction: "Since knowledge that DRAGON ROUGE operation under consideration

may soon become public, steps must be taken urgently to minimize adverse impact throughout [the] world." Then, reflecting the strategy of downplaying the US role in whatever events were to follow in the Congo, the text continued saying that it was therefore "imperative" for *Belgium*, supported by the United States, to take the initiative to "pre-position" documentation that could be made public when and if DRAGON ROUGE was launched, and which would put the operation in the "best possible light in UN and elsewhere."

Harriman had in mind, of course, getting an invitation for intervention from the Congo's leaders. The main target was to be Kasavubu "because of his much greater acceptability in Africa and in [the] world generally." But if Kasavubu was "inaccessible" and speed became the overriding consideration, then Tshombe should be approached. The following action was proposed, all to be done without revealing any details of DRAGON ROUGE:<sup>64</sup>

- Obtain two undated letters signed by Kasavubu, one to President Lefèvre requesting that the Belgians send a rescue force to Stanleyville, and the second to President Johnson requesting that the United States support the Belgian force; if and when the force was sent, then the letters would be dated and published;
- Obtain a proposed press release, also undated and signed by Kasavubu, which would be issued along with the letters;
- Obtain agreement of Kasavubu that his representative to the United Nations would be instructed to transmit copies of the Johnson and Lefèvre letters to the UN Secretary General with the request that they be circulated to members of the Security Council; these instructions in writing would be held by the US Ambassador to the United Nations for turnover to the Congolese delegation, when and if the rescue operation occurred.

In a message immediately following, Harriman forwarded to Brussels the verbatim texts of the proposed letters and press release. Now all that was necessary was to get Belgian cooperation and Kasavubu's signatures. But there were problems.

Why would the Congolese approve an airborne operation? Van de Waele's column with ANC troops attached was moving within striking distance of Stanleyville; if a Belgian/American force arrived first, the luster of seizing the rebel capital would pass to them. No Congolese politician with an eye to his future would want to be on record inviting neo-colonialist Belgians back into the country, and especially their much-feared paratroopers—bringing to mind their uninvited intervention in 1960 following the mutiny of the *Force Publique*. And to do what? Save whites again? The emphasis in the letters was on the "get in, get out" nature of the rescue. What would happen to Congolese left behind to the mercy of the *jeunesse* and Olenga's soldiers if the airborne rescue force went in and got out before Van de Waele arrived? Finally, if there were atrocities to whites, would this not further discredit the rebels, further dampening any talk of reconciliation with them?<sup>65</sup>

The Belgians went along with Harriman's initiatives on the surface, but knowing well Congolese thinking, behind the scenes they did not push their ambassador in Leopoldville to get the Kasavubu letter to Lefèvre. Perhaps also, Spaak and Lefèvre sensed the American strategy to downgrade the US role, while promoting that of the Belgians.

Following transmission of the verbatim texts, Harriman "after further consideration" changed the addressee of Kasavubu's American "invitation" from President Johnson to Ambassador Godley. The letter, and the answer the United States planned to send providing the requested support for the "Belgian force," could be played much lower key at embassy rather than White House level. Thus, in his guidance to Brussels, and most revealing of the games diplomats play, Harriman told Ambassador MacArthur *not* to encourage the Belgians to do the same (that is downgrade the addressee of the "Belgian invitation" from president to ambassador), "since we see desirable implication of US subsidiary role in having addressee letter to Belgians at higher level than US addressee."<sup>66</sup> Again, Spaak and Lefèvre probably saw the "desirable implication" as well and decided not to join in the game.

It was up to Godley, therefore, to carry the ball mostly by himself, and as it had been a month before with the proposed aircraft stand-down communique, and less than a week before with the reconciliation effort, Godley had problems getting an audience.

On the nineteenth, Tshombe's secretary (and mistress) died of a cerebral hemorrhage and Tshombe went into seclusion mourning her death. Kasavubu, unfortunately, was impossible to reach without first going through Tshombe.

The next evening, 6 or so hours following Spaak's announcement that a rescue force was on Ascension, Godley cabled that Tshombe was still in complete isolation.<sup>67</sup> On the twenty-first, in the message advising Godley that the decision had been made to move DRAGON ROUGE to Kamina, the Congo Working Group almost in a state of frenzy told him it was *essential* to get written requests from "somebody."<sup>68</sup> The force would soon be in Congolese airspace, and it would be most embarrassing to arrive at Kamina without invitation. Once again Godley was finding it tough to be an ambassador.

Finally, at 2115 hours Leopoldville time on the twenty-first, about the same time CHALK-1 was taking off from Ascension, Godley got his letters—signed by Tshombe—one addressed to him, one to U Thant, and the "when and if" press release. Kasavubu had refused to sign them apparently because of his "ire" over hearing Spaak's announcement of the "airborne training exercise" at Ascension, and "only with great reluctance" would he acquiesce in any rescue effort. Probably to get Kasavubu's concurrence Tshombe made some changes in Harriman's proposed texts. Rather than "request" the Belgian Government to send a humanitarian rescue force and the US Government to provide the means of transport, the word "authorize" was substituted. And rather than "invitation," Tshombe substituted "concurrence."

As the much-relieved Ambassador cabled the long-awaited news to Washington late that night, he added that early the next morning he planned to phone Tshombe and say that he had "just been informed" that 12 US C-130 aircraft would be landing shortly at Kamina.<sup>69</sup>

### **The Nairobi Talks**

Ambassador Godley was indeed fortunate in getting Tshombe's signature on the authorization to intervene letters, for Tshombe's ire had been equally as aroused as Kasavubu's. At 2 in

the morning on the twenty-first, at a small social gathering at Godley's residence, Tshombe "repeated four times his distress" about hearing Spaak's announcement over the radio. Why had Spaak not given him the courtesy of prior notification? Godley reported to Washington at 0330 hours, before crawling off to bed: 'We all should realize that we are up against a pair of men, Tshombe and Kasavubu, who have come to [the] conclusion that they have been 'pushed around' by Belgians and Americans quite enough.'<sup>70</sup> And there was something else galling Tshombe, something instigated by Americans alone

On the eighteenth, Carlson's execution had been postponed—according to Radio Stanleyville—by the appeal on humanitarian grounds from President Kenyatta. The twenty-third had been set as the new execution date pending outcome of a "proposition" by Thomas Kanza, Gbenye's Foreign Minister. Once again, as in the earlier effort at reconciliation, hopes turned to Nairobi. On the nineteenth, State Department spokesman Robert McCloskey announced that the United States would send a representative to meet with a rebel representative at a time and place of Gbenye's choosing. Wayne Fredericks, the member of the Africa Bureau with the best contacts in Africa, was on the road to Nairobi before he could even get guidance on what he was to negotiate. In Leopoldville, where Ambassador Godley was trying to get signatures on proposed press releases and authorizations to intervene, Tshombe was wondering and fuming about what the United States might be doing behind his back.

Guidelines for negotiations caught up with Fredericks in Brussels, where he had stopped off first to coordinate his mission with the Belgians. In a cable approved by George Ball, Fredericks was instructed to propose the following "political deal" with the rebels, which echoed our previously instigated and aborted reconciliation effort: the Congo would guarantee the personal safety of all rebels who laid down their arms; would offer them political amnesty, full freedom to engage in political activity while preparing for forthcoming elections, and the right to hold office if elected. If the rebels were interested, the United States in concert with the Belgians and "possibly" the OAU, would launch a major effort to win the Congolese Government's acceptance.

In Ball's mind, the proposal was an "irrefutable record" of a US-Belgian attempt to gain a peaceful political settlement and a

final effort to secure the safety of the hostages "short of perilous military solution."<sup>71</sup> It was a noble diplomatic effort, but it would never sell—not to the Belgians or the rebels, and certainly not to Tshombe and Kasavubu. Fredericks would hang around Brussels for a few more days trying to work things out with the Belgians, and then return directly to Washington.\*

Research uncovered no record of the Belgian reaction to the proposed demarche, except that they objected. Ambassador Godley's feelings, however, were spelled out in a three-page cable to Washington, which possibly encompassed much of what the Belgians, with their long experience in, and insights into, the Congo, were thinking:<sup>73</sup>

- The rebels would never negotiate for Carlson nor anyone else except in return for a cease-fire and withdrawal of military aid to Tshombe; certainly Tshombe would never agree to this, giving the rebels the pause in the fighting they needed in exchange for the lives of whites; if we attempted to force this exchange, white lives for terms agreeable to the rebels, it would become obvious and the United States would lose prestige in Africa and around the world to an "unfathomable extent";
- There were no rebel leaders ready to consider reintegrating the Congolese Government, nor many rebel soldiers who felt they would survive long with the ANC after laying down their arms; the ANC (with the mercenaries leading the way) now had the ability to take Stanleyville with or without US and Belgian approval;
- Negotiating with the rebels now was against our interests if the price involved a slowdown of the military advance; all

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\*An interesting exchange occurred during Fredericks' stop in Brussels enroute to Nairobi. Ambassador MacArthur told Fredericks that Fredericks' mission reminded him of the Japanese Ambassador who had the unfortunate assignment of explaining Japanese peace efforts in Washington while the bombs were falling on Pearl Harbor—leaving a stigma that followed him the rest of his life. Fredericks' position, MacArthur suggested, would be equally untenable if, while he was negotiating in Africa, the paratroopers fell on Stanleyville. Fredericks, who enjoyed close relations in many African countries, was not a bit happy with his assignment and was no doubt relieved to be recalled to Washington.<sup>72</sup>

"knowledgeable diplomatic colleagues" in Leopoldville agreed that only sustained military pressure was likely to save the lives of the hostages.

—In sum, it was essential that no one be given any reason to believe that the United States could or would force a cease-fire down Tshombe's throat, or that we could or would in any way halt Van de Waele's advance on Stanleyville.

Washington sent new instructions, this time for Ambassador Attwood in Nairobi and with objectives far more limited than the "political deal." Attwood was told that the goal now was simply to buy time, to avoid any appearance of rebuffing a negotiation offer, and to explore every possible means to peacefully resolve the hostage problem. The objective of discussions should be the safety of the civilian population in Stanleyville, not proposals for a cease-fire, withdrawal of military aid, or the future political order in the Congo. He was told that whatever happened he was not to break off talks; at the end of any meeting he should arrange to meet the following day for further discussions.

These instructions were also sent to Brussels for MacArthur to inform Spaak. Spaak was to be told that "we accept completely" that the Van de Waele column should not be held up, "but should proceed with assault on Stan with all possible speed."<sup>74</sup> Brussels, Leopoldville, and Washington were now on the same wicket. And Carlson was still scheduled to die on the twenty-third.

Attwood's hopes for diplomatic success looked pretty dim, especially after President Kenyatta had announced that "after very careful examination" he was not prepared to help evacuate hostages unless the fighting ceased. Then the morning of the twenty-first, almost as an echo of Kenyatta's announcement, Hoyt and his Belgian counterpart, Baron Nothomb, were forced to sign a statement which was broadcast over Radio Stanleyville: they were still alive and would remain alive only if military aid to Tshombe ended immediately; cease aid and cease fire—these were the conditions for opening negotiations.<sup>75</sup> About this same time, Attwood drove to Kenyatta's residence for the first meeting with Kanza, as arranged by Kenyatta. Kanza never showed up. It is quite possible that he was making a rushed trip to Stanleyville.

*At 0700 in the morning [November 22] Consuls Hoyt and Nothomb were called to go to Gbenye's Palace. On arrival at the Palace, Gbenye showed Hoyt and Nothomb a cable from*

*Ambassador Godley requesting that the American Consul be given an independent means of communication. Gbenye said that independent communications could not be allowed at the present time because the population of Stanleyville would misinterpret this "favoritism." Gbenye also told Hoyt that he did not wish to execute Carlson as this would set off a chain reaction which would inevitably result in the deaths of all Europeans. Gbenye said also that Thomas Kanza is expected to come to Stanleyville for consultations.*

Kenyatta arranged the second meeting for the morning of the twenty-third, the day Carlson was scheduled to be executed. This time Kanza was there. Smiling and gay, he lacked the demeanor of a foreign minister whose capital was about to be overrun. He would discuss the Congo only in general terms, but there had to be a cease-fire and a halt to the ANC advance before there could be any talk of hostages. Kenyatta agreed that this sounded reasonable, and added that Tshombe's "perfidy" in refusing to agree to a cease-fire and the withdrawal of mercenaries in accordance with the OAU resolution was the cause of the present problem—along with US and Belgian aid, without which he would collapse.

Attwood stuck to his instructions: he could talk only about the safety of the hostages. Obviously, he said, there was a conflict in views. He would have to report back to Washington for further instructions, and he proposed meeting again when he had a reply. This was agreed, but before adjourning Attwood had to know something about Carlson. Kanza volunteered the information Washington wanted to hear: Carlson was alive and Kanza would notify Gbenye to postpone the execution pending the resumption of discussions.<sup>76</sup> Kenyatta endorsed Kanza's action, agreeing that there should not be executions while negotiations were under way. But then Kanza spoiled the scene: "If the mercenaries attack Stanleyville, we cannot guarantee the prisoners will be safe."<sup>77</sup>

The report of these talks arrived in Washington just before the top Congo crisis managers were to gather and face up to the big decision. In carrying out his instructions to the letter, Attwood had arranged the stall they wanted: Carlson was apparently safe for the moment.

### **Last-Minute Worries and Guidance**

As the DRAGON ROUGE force and Van de Waele's column moved ever closer to Stanleyville, officials at all levels and agencies involved with the operation were reflecting and worrying over last-

minute details, hoping to anticipate all problems and contingencies. One such agency was the Bureau of Intelligence and Research in the State Department. Removed from the 24-hour crash of operations, its personnel had time to reflect. One of their think papers, perhaps tasked by Ball or Harriman, was entitled "The Price of DRAGON ROUGE," a copy of which Brubeck forwarded to McGeorge Bundy on November 19 with the comment: "I believe it the best balanced judgment we can get; AF\*, of course, would be much more pessimistic." Brubeck also opined that the study probably reflected "the Secretary's judgment."

It is hard to imagine that there could have been a judgment more pessimistic. According to the study, if the United States launched DRAGON ROUGE into Stanleyville, the OAU and the UN Security Council would convene sessions and we would be blasted and condemned in both. The Soviets, in arrears with the United Nations over earlier Congo peacekeeping operations, would exploit our intervention in the Congo to justify their refusal to pay—and now receive sympathetic support. The United States would lose support on the issue of Chinese representation in the United Nations. Our embassies and personnel would be attacked in many capitals. The price the United States would have to pay for overseas rights and installations would go up, and we would probably lose all rights to Wheelus Air Force Base in Libya, an important military window on the Mediterranean and springboard to the Middle East and Africa. In the longer term, the United States would find the voices of the moderates hesitant to back us on future world issues. In no case "is the outlook promising."<sup>78</sup>

"The Price of DRAGON ROUGE" was based on the same concerns that had been expressed in the months preceding—beginning, for example, with the clampdown on US paratroopers of JTF LEO riding "shotgun" on helicopters. The Congo was a sensitive issue. In the early weeks of the crisis, President Johnson had to safeguard his election—don't let the Congo bubble burst. Now he had his build-up in Vietnam and the world was watching—if the Congo bubble bursts, at least keep the noise level down. So again, General Adams received guidance from the Joint Chiefs about what his soldiers and airmen could and could not do:

In view [of the] highly sensitive nature [of] DRAGON ROUGE, request that action be taken to minimize the

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\*This was a reference to the Africa Bureau in the State Department and the opinions of Governor Williams and Wayne Fredericks

appearance [of the] US role therein, particularly if and when operations are conducted in the Stanleyville area. Every effort should be made to ensure that US personnel avoid incidents, fire-fights, mob or riot actions and do not *repeat not* leave the airfield.<sup>79</sup>

Later, apparently after more reflection and consultations with the Belgians, more complete guidance was issued for all DRAGON ROUGE military commanders, which interestingly was drafted by William Brubeck, the White House representative on the Congo Working Group. It was guidance in keeping with the instructions General Dougherty had received in Brussels when he was told not to plan "a John Wayne operation";<sup>80</sup>

- DRAGON ROUGE was solely humanitarian in character; it was not an operation designed to facilitate military operations of the ANC;
- The mission was evacuation of foreign nationals and Congolese civilians whose lives were threatened by political reprisals;
- Upon completion of the mission, the force would withdraw with the least possible delay; it would not remain in Stanleyville after completion of the evacuation to hold the city for the arrival of the ANC;
- It was important to evacuate Congolese nationals, not only for humanitarian considerations, but also "to establish that DRAGON ROUGE is not just concerned with [the] Western foreign community."

There were two requests, both originating with Ambassador Godley, that served to test application of the guidance and Washington's seriousness in maintaining the public image at the expense of the operational need. The first was his request to have John Clingerman accompany DRAGON ROUGE into Stanleyville. The reader will recall that Clingerman, Hoyt's predecessor in Stanleyville, had joined the force at Kleine Brogel in order to brief Belgian troops on the location of Americans in the city. To Godley, it was necessary to have Clingerman continue with the force into Stanleyville, since he was the person most likely to know where Americans might go if they were able to "get back to some of their old haunts." Washington answered that Clingerman should not go

beyond Kamina; hold down the US image and role. Godley persisted. Washington refused again. Finally, after 3 days of back and forth messages, Washington agreed that Clingerman could accompany the force "using utmost caution and discretion not [to] expose himself [to] unnecessary dangers."<sup>81</sup> Godley won one.

Godley's second request concerned giving Lieutenant Colonel Rattan, the US Army liaison officer riding along in the VdW Column with his unmounted Collins radio, reliable full-time communications with Leopoldville. It was essential, Godley felt, to know the exact whereabouts of the column in relation to Stanleyville in order to coordinate DRAGON ROUGE with Van de Waele, or vice-versa. Van de Waele's communication link with Leopoldville relied on personnel in ANC Headquarters, who were "notoriously incompetent" and were known to let messages sit in the radio room "for 3 days before delivering."<sup>82</sup>

Washington disapproved Godley's request in a message written by Palmer and approved by Ball, Harriman, Wheeler, Vance, Williams, and Brubeck: we do not wish to assume "added potential political liabilities of associating US Armed Forces personnel with VdW Column."<sup>83</sup> This was a strange answer since Rattan was already with the column, and a classic example of a political override of sound military common sense. The sole reason for Rattan and his sergeant accompanying the column, endangering their lives, was coordination and liaison. Now the payoff was near, but they needed good communications. Godley lost this one.

Three days later, on the eve of DRAGON ROUGE when worries in the Congo Working Group were really beginning to mount, Godley received a message that must have seemed like veritable gobbledygook in view of his request for communications with Rattan. He was told to do his "utmost to ensure coordination" between Van de Waele and DRAGON ROUGE, but at the same time "our public position should not reflect any such coordination since [the] latter operation should appear as strictly humanitarian."<sup>84</sup> Hence, Rattan would have to continue riding along in silence and looking for a power plug for his radio.

All of the above designs to win international understanding and acceptance would go for naught if they could not be brought to the world's attention. There would, of course, be a circular telegram

from Washington to all posts with instructions to emphasize at the highest official levels the humanitarian nature of the operation, the exhaustion of US efforts to find a political remedy, the US intent to get in and get out quickly, and the dangers to the lives of civilians from many countries if we did not go in. But the big forum we would have to face sooner or later was the United Nations, and as the drafters of the "price paper" pointed out, this could prove troublesome.

It was a question of timing, and obviously whatever the United States did would have to be in concert with the Belgians. If the United States and Belgium, armed with Tshombe's signed "concurrence" for intervention (versus invitation), approached the United Nations before DRAGON ROUGE forces dropped on Stanleyville, the United States would likely be dragged into the Security Council by the Soviets and radical African states and put on the defensive. As Spaak feared, an approach too early might get the Council on record in favor of a cease-fire, which could stop both DRAGON ROUGE and Van de Waele. If we went in late, while both DRAGON ROUGE and Van de Waele were by "coincidence" assaulting Stanleyville at the same time, our hopes for understanding and acceptance might be hard to fulfill.

Washington's answer was to approach the United Nations while the drop was taking place, or had just taken place—following the Gulf of Tonkin scenario. As Ambassador MacArthur was told to tell Spaak, there were abundant precedents for this kind of operation, using a controlled force on a limited objective while offering simultaneous public explanation. Spaak should recall that in Lebanon, the Cuban missile crisis, and Tonkin it had been possible to avoid unfriendly resolutions and provide effective political "cover" to remove the "potential bad taste" of a necessary military action. The United States and Belgium should make a "report to the world," frankly exposing the evidence and reasoning that had led the Congolese to "authorize" (but not request) our military action.<sup>85</sup>

Unfortunately, the US and Belgian report to the world would have to be given to the Russians. On the twenty-first, the day following Spaak's announcement that a humanitarian rescue force was on the *Ile d'Ascension*, the US Embassy in Moscow reported its assessment of the probable Russian reaction to DRAGON ROUGE.

The assessment hit the nail squarely on the head. Any move into the Congo would be considered by the Russians as serious interference in the internal affairs of another state. The United States could expect the Soviets to blast the "hypocrisy" of using military operations under the cover of humanitarian needs.<sup>86</sup> Obviously, the Russians would be in the vanguard to counter any effort we would make to remove the "bad taste" of a necessary military action.

### **The Decision**

In researching this study, no minutes or records were found of the meetings in which the decisionmakers pondered if and when the DRAGON ROUGE assault should be launched on Stanleyville. Nor did the memories of those interviewed, reaching back 13 years, fill many of the blanks. William Brubeck remembers that as the situation heated there was a regular meeting each morning of "The Eight" in Dean Rusk's office to decide the American "GO" or "NO GO" for the day—"The Eight" being Rusk, Ball, Harriman, Bundy, Wheeler, Vance, Palmer, and himself (the President was still at the Ranch following his speech at his alma mater).<sup>87</sup> If the situation has been followed to this point, however, one can probably put together with reasonable accuracy the order and relative weight of the many factors, considerations, arguments, and events that were placed before the participants and became the basis for decision.

One of the first factors forcing decision each morning was time. In OPLAN 319 the planners had decided that H-hour would be 0600 hours Stanleyville time on "any given day"—hoping to give the aircraft and paratroopers the concealment of the dawn haze, catch the defenders still asleep or drowsy, and provide a full day of light to seize the city and find hostages. From this early morning hour, the clock had to be backed off for the 2 ½-hour flight from Kamina to Stanleyville, troop reaction and loading, time to communicate orders, unforeseen goofs and problems, and of course for reaching the GO-PUNCH decision itself in two capitals. But how much time? Military commanders would be inclined to pad the time between notification and execution. Crisis managers would tend to cut time between decision and execution, but pad the time between the weighing of alternatives and decision. So time forced a deadline in each day's deliberations.

The lead DRAGON ROUGE plane had no sooner arrived at Kamina on the twenty-second than Governor Harriman, being

"marginally activist," started thinking about assaulting Stanleyville on the twenty-third or twenty-fourth. Uppermost in his mind, of course, was Carlson's scheduled execution on the twenty-third. Shortly after midnight (the twenty-second) he sent two telegrams. One went to Kamina telling the DRAGON ROUGE commanders to be prepared to execute the assault on the twenty-third.<sup>88</sup> The other message went to MacArthur requesting that he seek out Spaak's "latest judgment" and report by 11 o'clock Washington time that morning—apparently the time set for a meeting of "The Eight." MacArthur was told that "we are inclined to give maximum weight to Belgian judgment in reaching [a] decision."<sup>89</sup>

It must have been a short meeting that Sunday morning and no record was found of Spaak's "judgment" (which was probably telephoned by MacArthur). It was quickly decided, however, that more time was needed. Telegrams were sent immediately to five US Embassies with instructions to report information "useful in making [a] decision." A deadline for reporting was set for 1630 hours that same day. Significant in terms of the information probably being weighed by the decisionmakers, three embassies were tasked in addition to Brussels and Leopoldville: Nairobi obviously for the latest on the talks with Kanza; Bujumbura presumably for any late interceptions from Radio Stanleyville; and Kampala for any late reports on Idi Amin's arms trafficking to the rebels.<sup>90</sup>

To get a feel for what must have been a paramount consideration at that Sunday morning meeting, it is useful at this point to interject General Adams' latest views from Strike Command. He was, after all, the senior American military commander closely watching the operation, and it was one of his subordinates, the commander of JTF LEO, who was at this point, under terms of the joint US-Belgian agreement, in overall command of the DRAGON ROUGE force.\*

Adams saw possible disaster. He felt and advised the Joint Chiefs that with all the coverage by press and radio the rebels would surely "deduce all but [the] moment of drop." All DRAGON ROUGE planning had been predicated on surprise. It must be assumed, he wrote, that the rebels were "not completely lacking in intelligence or

\*Colonel Clayton M. Isaacson, USAF JCS passed operational control of DRAGON ROUGE from CINCEUR to CINCSRIKE/MEAFSA at 200858 November 1964 (JCS Message 002100)

will to resist." A C-130 aircraft, flying at 125 knots at an altitude of 1,200 feet, makes a good target, to say nothing of the exposed, falling parachutists. Effective air support was vital to suppress anticipated ground fire. But again, possible disaster! The T-28s and B-26s supporting the assault were old and were flown by pilots without previous practice or training in airborne operations.<sup>91</sup>

This gloomy analysis arrived in Washington the evening of the twenty-first, and was surely fresh in the minds of "The Eight" when they met the next morning. No doubt also it caused some second thoughts among those who felt that in order to emphasize the humanitarian aspects of the operation for the world to view, DRAGON ROUGE should get in and get out ahead of Van de Waele. However, despite all the talk that the operation should not appear to facilitate the advance of the column, the successful advance of the column into the city might well be a prerequisite for offsetting military disaster to the paratroopers and airmen. As Arnhem had gone down in the book of airborne military disasters as "the bridge too far," Stanleyville might be recorded as "the drop too soon." Godley was thinking along similar lines and his latest recommendations were also hot off the teletype that Sunday morning: the best means to save the hostages, he wrote, was "to bring maximum *simultaneous* military pressure on Stan."<sup>92</sup> In short, we could not have it both ways, putting up a humanitarian front while at the same time pursuing sound military logic.

Therefore, for the second meeting on the twenty-second, all thoughts turned to the status of the Van de Waele column. The reader will recall that on the twentieth, one of Hoare's commando units was across the Lowa River north of Punia (see Map 2). The vehicle ferry, however, was not to be found, and the decision was made to halt the advance until the entire column, Lima I and Lima II, could cross the Lowa. The way to Stanleyville would then be open and Van de Waele wanted the whole force concentrated for the final push.\* An hour before the meeting Washington received Godley's report. Senior American and Belgian military officers had met at Kindu, and Van de Waele had announced that his complete column should be at Lubutu by noon on the twenty-third, ready to push the last 130 miles through the night and arrive at Stanleyville early the twenty-fourth.

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\*Hoare disagreed. He felt his mercenaries, the Strike Force of Lima I, could be in Stanleyville in 10 hours, and he considered continuing the advance with or without the ANC (Lima II) and Van de Waele's permission.<sup>93</sup>

Godley also reported that Colonel Isaacson, the JTF LEO and now DRAGON ROUGE commander, strongly favored launching DRAGON ROUGE on the twenty-third and ahead of Van de Waele's arrival, as any further delay would complicate the problem. There were, Godley recognized, some important complications. Carlson's execution was set for the twenty-third, and the news could leak any minute that the rescue force was now at Kamina, perhaps triggering Carlson's execution. But Godley reported that there was no evidence of a security leak, or any evidence of increasing danger to the hostages (except the unconfirmed report that they had been removed from the city). He, Ambassador DeKerchove, Van de Waele, and Laurent all recommended the airborne assault for the twenty-fourth, simultaneous with the arrival of the column.<sup>94</sup>

It must have been a long meeting, or perhaps some time was spent communicating with the Ranch, for it was not until 9:30 that night that the message went out that decision had been deferred again. They would meet the next morning.<sup>95</sup> At Kamina it was 0430 hours on the twenty-third, and the alerted troops "literally sat on the edge of our seats all night waiting for the word which never came."<sup>96</sup> In Nairobi, Ambassador Attwood was waking up on the day he was to meet with Kenyatta and Kanza—perhaps reflecting on his instructions to keep the talks going, and now it was essential that he succeed.

In comparison with the two meetings on the twenty-second when decision had been deferred, the meeting on the morning of the twenty-third must have been a relatively easy one. Everything was "GO." Attwood had neatly stalled the talks, Carlson was apparently still alive, and the "prisoners of war" were hopefully still in the city. Tshombe had signed all the concurrence to intervene letters and had his US-drafted press release ready. Ambassador Stevenson in the United Nations was ready to make his report to the world in conjunction with the Belgian and Congolese delegations. There were signs that top-level rebel leaders might have fled Stanleyville, leaving the city to the *jeunesse*, and there were new sightings of Russian transport aircraft, possibly bound for the Congo.<sup>97</sup> As of 0538 hours Washington time the column was on schedule, the mercenaries had taken Lubutu, and resistance had been light. And, surprise of all surprises, there still had been no leak of the move from Ascension to Kamina.

Basically, on the morning of the twenty-third, it was a simple decision whether mercenary and ANC troops would enter Stanleyville with or without DRAGON ROUGE, for as Godley had pointed out, the column would soon be attacking the city with or without US approval. If the column attacked alone, advancing slowly up the highway, by the time it arrived there could be dead bodies all over town—or possibly a death march of hostages to the north. There would be a much more righteous excuse to massacre hostages—at least in African eyes—if done in retaliation for attack by mercenaries. If the mercenaries bungled the job, and the world learned we had sat idly by at Kamina . . . ? If there were a leak, rebel panic in Stanleyville, and again we were caught sitting idly by . . . ? At about noon, Ambassador Palmer came out of Rusk's office into the assembled Congo Working Group and said: "We're going."<sup>98</sup>

The Joint Chiefs transmitted the execution order for OPLAN 319 at 1410 hours Washington time on the twenty-third.<sup>99</sup> One document probably accounts for the roughly 2 hours between "The Eight's" decision to "GO" and the JCS transmission of "PUNCH." It was a FLASH message drafted by Brubeck "For MacArthur from Rusk" and it was cleared for transmission at 1244 hours by Rusk, McNamara, and Bundy (that is, the top-level decisionmakers). The message tasked MacArthur to determine "without introducing *new* delay in Spaak's decision" the answer to the question that must have been uppermost in Johnson's mind before he would approve the "GO" recommendation. Assuming Van de Waele attacked Stanleyville early on the twenty-fourth as he said he could, what was the Belgian estimate of the increased risk to the hostages if DRAGON ROUGE was *not* launched and Van de Waele attacked alone?<sup>100</sup>

Apparently within about an hour Spaak gave the same answer as the President got from "The Eight." Spaak, too, presumably saw dead bodies all over town and a death march of hostages to the north. He, too, felt the best means to save the hostages was to bring maximum simultaneous military pressure on their captors. Apparently Spaak also gave the Belgian "PUNCH" without introducing a new delay.\*

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\*Again, no record was found of Spaak's reply or the Belgian "PUNCH." Ambassador MacArthur probably used the "scrambler" telephone.

At 1530 hours, Washington received confirmation that DRAGON ROUGE had received the JCS "PUNCH."<sup>101</sup> It was then 10:30 at night in Kamina, 4½ hours until CHALK-1 takeoff. About an hour later, Godley reported that Radio Brazzaville, at the seat of Gbenye's and Soumialot's *Conseil National de Libération*, had broadcast that the US, Belgian, and British Ambassadors in Brazzaville had just made a "joint demarche" to the Brazzaville Foreign Minister to deliver notification that Belgian paratroopers would make a drop on Stanleyville at dawn on the twenty-fourth.<sup>102</sup> For those recalling General Adams' analysis, the rebels now should no longer even have to deduce the moment of drop! Whatever Brazzaville knew, Stanleyville certainly knew as well.\*

Later that night, most of the principal players and overseers to the drama of the past 110 days began crowding around the maps, charts, and communication machines in the Congo Working Group. Since H-hour Tuesday in Stanleyville would be 2300 hours Monday in Washington, and the crisis managers wanted to offset any impression that something special was about to happen, it had been agreed that no one would cancel a scheduled social event; so many arrived in tuxedos and evening wear. Most planned to sweat it out all night—except the man tagged by the President "to pay particular attention to Africa." Governor Harriman, the seasoned veteran of many international crises, arrived from a dinner party, spent an hour or so, and then departed saying: "Somebody has to be ready to talk to the press tomorrow morning; guess I'll go home."<sup>103</sup>

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While "The Eight" in Washington were in the throes of making their big decision, Mike Hoyt in Stanleyville was going to a party:

*At about 1600 in the afternoon [November 23] Nothomb, Hoyt and Italian Honorary Consul Massaccesi were taken to Gbenye's Palace where they found Rombaudo, the Honorary British Consul and a number of Congolese. The event was a reception, complete with orchestre and beer, for a Mr. Scotland. Scotland was allegedly a journalist and a friend of Thomas Kanza's who is visiting Stanleyville to report back to Kanza on the situation of the European and American hostages. Scotland*

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\*There had been no such demarche. The announcement over Radio Brazzaville had probably been made to test American and Belgian reaction or to fish for information.

... taped interviews with each of the four consuls and took a number of photographs. However, there was no chance, according to Hoyt and Nothomb to talk freely with Scotland...

Scotland stated with Gbenye's approval he intended to come to the Residence Victoria at 0930 Tuesday morning [the twenty-fourth] to take photographs of the European and American hostages which would provide documentary proof that they were well-treated.

Due to events of the following day, Mr. Scotland never took the photographs at the Victoria Hotel.

### Endnotes

- 1 Message, Department of State 267 to Embassy Brussels (transmitted 151131 August 1964)
- 2 Mike Hoare, *Congo Mercenary* (London: Robert Hale, Ltd., 1967), p 81  
Information also provided by Ambassador Godley.
- 3 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 1742 to Department of State (received 032029 November 1964)
4. Mike Hoare, *Congo Mercenary*, p. 84, LTC Donald V. Rattan, *The Congo-1964—Bukavu to Stanleyville*, unpublished journal, interview with MG Donald V. Rattan, Ft Myer, Virginia, 28 November 1977
5. Mike Hoare, *Congo Mercenary*, p. 88
- 6 *New York Times*, 17 November 1961, p. 1. Information also provided by Ambassador Godley
- 7 David Reed, *111 Days in Stanleyville* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp 178-180
- 8 Hoare, *Congo Mercenary*, pp 96-98
- 9 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 1820 to Department of State (received 100257 November 1964).
- 10 Hoare, *Congo Mercenary*, p. 99
- 11 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 1801 to Department of State (received 071407 November 1964)
- 12 Interview, William Brubeck, 27 January 1978

- 13 Memorandum to McGeorge Bundy, subject Stanleyville Hostage Problem, dated 9 November 1964
- 14 New York Times, 8 November 1964, p 1
- 15 Message, Department of State 1184 to Embassy Leopoldville (transmitted 092124 November 1964)
- 16 Message, Department of State 1183 to Embassy Leopoldville (transmitted 092123 November 1964)
- 17 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 1827 to Department of State (received 100124 November 1964)
- 18 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 1911 to Department of State (received 161057 November 1964)
- 19 Message, Consulate Bukavu 293 to Department of State (received 151000 November 1964)
- 20 Interview with Governor Harriman, 21 October 1977
- 21 Interview, General Russell E Dougherty, Arlington, Virginia, 16 March 1978, JCS telecon follow-up Message, JCS 89238 to USCINCEUR, 11 November 1964
- 22 Interview, General Dougherty
- 23 After-action Report, "STAN-PAULIS, 24-27 Novembre 1964," Belgian General Headquarters, June 1965, p 5
- 24 Message, Embassy Brussels 938 to Department of State (received 131828 November 1964).
- 25 Message, Department of State 989 to Embassy Brussels (transmitted 132044 November 1964)
- 26 Message, Embassy Brussels 920 to Department of State (131057 November 1964)
- 27 General Lyman Lemnitzer, as quoted by General Dougherty in interview 16 March 1978
- 28 Message, CINCSRIKE/MEAFSA, ECJC-A 19978 to JCS (transmitted 14 November 1964)
- 29 Ibid See also After-action Report, Operation DRAGON ROUGE, Headquarters, Regiment Paracommando, Caserne Terre-Neuve, Namur (undated)
- 30 Message, CINCSRIKE/MEAFSA STRCC 893/64 to JCS (13 November 1964), message, JCS 001866 to CINCSRIKE/MEAFSA (13 November 1964)

31. Message, CINCSRIKE/MEAFSA STRCC 970/54 to JCS (171936 November 1964).
32. Message, CINCSRIKE/MEAFSA STRCC 911/64 to JCS (transmitted 152106 November 1964)
33. Message, Department of State 1001 to Embassy Brussels (transmitted 151603 November 1964).
34. Memorandum, W. Averell Harriman to General Wheeler, subject. DRAGON ROUGE, 16 November 1964
35. Message, JCS 001984 to Embassy Brussels (transmitted 171859 November 1964).
36. Message, USCINCEUR ECJCA 00340 to JCS (21 November 1964).
37. Message, Embassy Brussels 948 to Department of State (received 151002 November 1964).
38. Message, Department of State 1001 to Embassy Brussels (transmitted 151603 November 1964). Emphasis added.
39. Memorandum, McGeorge Bundy to President Johnson, subject: "Congo Situation," 16 November 1964.
40. Message, Department of State 1006 to Embassy Brussels (transmitted 161358 November 1964).
41. Message, JCS 001903 to USCINCEUR (transmitted 161432 November 1964).
42. Colonel Robert A. Lindsay (USAF, Ret.), undated and unpublished manuscript, pp. 4-5.
43. Message, Embassy Leopoldville 1935 to Department of State (received 171321 November 1964).
44. Message, Embassy Bujumbura 481 to Department of State (received 180553 November 1964); message, Consulate Bukavu 41 to Embassy Nairobi (received 182026 November 1964).
45. Message, Department of State 1006, date/time group illegible.
46. Message, Embassy Leopoldville 1961 to Department of State (received 181232 November 1964)
47. *La Libre Belgique*, 28 December 1977, p. 4, interview R M Beaudry, Washington, DC, 13 October 1977.
48. Message, Department of State Circular 980 to All Posts (transmitted 20 November 1964). Emphasis added

- 49 Message, Department of State Circular 980, message, Department of State Circular 979 (transmitted 201407 November 1964)
- 50 Message, Embassy Brussels 986 to Department of State (received 181404 November 1964)
- 51 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 1971 to Department of State (received 182139 November 1964)
- 52 Message, Department of State 1063 to Embassy Brussels (transmitted 190141 November 1964)
- 53 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 1894 to Department of State (received 141715 November 1964), *New York Times*, 18 November 1964, p 3
- 54 Information provided by Ambassador Godley.
- 55 Message, CINCEUR ECJC-L 00623 to JCS (201108 November 1964).
- 56 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 2004 to Department of State (received 201135 November 1964).
- 57 Message, Embassy Bujumbura 494 to Department of State (received 201239 November 1964)
- 58 Message, Department of State 1103 to Embassy Brussels (transmitted 202037 November 1964)
- 59 Message, McGeorge Bundy to President Johnson, Cite CAP 64316 (202022 November 1964)
- 60 Message, Department of State 1108 to Embassy Brussels (transmitted 210246 November 1964)
- 61 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 2029 to Department of State (received 211032 November 1964)
- 62 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 2030 to Department of State (211127 November 1964).
- 63 Message, Department of State 1111 to Embassy Brussels (transmitted 211305 November 1964), message, JCS 002160 (transmitted 211219 November 1964).
- 64 Message, Department of State 1044 to Embassy Brussels (transmitted 180048 November 1964).
- 65 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 1970 to Department of State (received 182153 November 1964)
- 66 Message, Department of State 1056 to Embassy Brussels (transmitted 181931 November 1964)

- 67 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 2007 to Department of State (received 201317 November 1964)
- 68 Message, Department of State 1346 to Embassy Leopoldville (transmitted 211305 November 1964)
- 69 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 2036 to Department of State (received 211839 November 1964)
- 70 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 2023 to Department of State (received 210218 November 1964)
- 71 Message, Department of State 1077 to Embassy Brussels (transmitted 192015 November 1964)
- 72 Interview with Robert M. Beaudry in Washington, DC, 13 October 1977
- 73 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 2008 to Department of State (received 201928 November 1964)
- 74 Message, Department of State 1922 to Embassy Nairobi (transmitted 201532 November 1964)
- 75 Message, Embassy Bujumbura 497 to Department of State (received 210650 November 1964)
- 76 Message, Embassy Nairobi 1399 to Department of State (received 230739 November 1964), message, Embassy Nairobi 1406 to Department of State (received 231059 November 1964)
- 77 William Attwood, *The Reds and the Blacks* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 210
- 78 White House paper, "The Price of DRAGON ROUGE," William Brubeck to McGeorge Bundy, 19 November 1964
- 79 Message, JCS 002044 to CINCSRIKE/MEAFSA (190750 November 1964)  
Emphasis added
- 80 Message, Department of State 1362 to Embassy Leopoldville (transmitted 220131 November 1964)
- 81 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 2011 to Department of State (received 201542 November 1964), message, Department of State 1366 to Embassy Leopoldville (transmitted 220856 November 1964)
- 82 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 2003 to Department State (received 200935 November 1964)
- 83 Message, Department of State 1334 to Embassy Leopoldville (transmitted 202235 November 1964)

84. Message, Department of State 1397 to Embassy Leopoldville (transmitted 232136 November 1964) Emphasis added.
85. Message, Department of State 1148 to Embassy Brussels (transmitted 231104 November 1964)
86. Message, Embassy Moscow 1596 to Department of State (received 210703 November 1964)
87. Interview, Ambassador William Brubeck, 27 January 1978
88. Message, Department of State 1361 to Embassy Leopoldville (transmitted 220114 November 1964)
89. Message, Department of State 1124 to Embassy Brussels (transmitted 220114 November 1964)
90. Message, Department of State 1131 to Embassy Brussels (transmitted 221129 November 1964)
91. Message, CINCSTRIKE/MEAFSA STRCC 1075/64 to JCS (received 211826 November 1964)
92. Message, Embassy Leopoldville 2038 to Department of State (received 212039 November 1964) Emphasis added
93. Mike Hoare, *Congo Mercenary*, pp 113-116
94. Message, Embassy Leopoldville 2057 to Department of State (received 221543 November 1964)
95. Message, Department of State 1380 to Embassy Leopoldville (transmitted 222126 November 1964)
96. Colonel Robert A. Lindsay, unpublished manuscript, p 6
97. Message, USAFE 00199 to Baldwin (230417 November 1964).
98. Interviews with William Brubeck, 27 January 1978, and Ambassador William Schaefele, 23 November 1977.
99. Message, JCS 002198 to CINCSTRIKE/MEAFSA (transmitted 231410 November 1964).
100. Message, Department of State 1147 to Embassy Brussels (transmitted 231244 November 1964)
101. Message, Department of State 1162 to Embassy Brussels (transmitted 232130 November 1964)
102. Message, Embassy Leopoldville 2084 to Department of State (received 231642 November 1964)
103. Interview, Walker Diamanti, 21 November 1977

## Rescue

# 6

As Mike Hoare said in his book: "It was obvious to every man in 5 Commando that it was going to be a hell of a night." To push a column of "light skinned" vehicles up a jungle road through possible ambush sites in daytime is bad enough. To do it at night could be suicide. It was now 1600 hours on November 23 and Colonel Van de Waele had just returned to Lubutu from Kindu, where he had announced that his column could push through the night and be at Stanleyville early the morning of the twenty-fourth. It would be up to Hoare to lead the way—to provide Van de Waele's part of the "maximum simultaneous military pressure" Ambassador Godley and others felt was necessary to save the hostages. The DRAGON ROUGE part of the "pressure," unknown to Hoare and Van de Waele, was still being decided in Washington and Brussels.

The column moved out, with Hoare's mercenaries as usual leading the way. It was growing dark, and to make matters worse it was raining and Hoare's open jeep was filled with 2 inches of water. After dark, while passing through a village, firing broke out. The column was fired upon in the next village, and again in the third, where luck ran out—one mercenary (a Cuban) caught a bullet in the stomach. At the next village the rebels were in greater force. A mercenary was killed outright and two were wounded. The column moved on. At the next gauntlet of fire, an NBC correspondent was killed while recording the sounds of war from the back of a truck.\*

\*George Clay, a 40-year old South African

This was enough for Hoare: "para drop or no para drop," he was not going to move his men any farther in the dark. They stopped, burned the village, and waited for dawn. It had been the "most terrifying and harrowing experience" of Hoare's life.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, Ambassador Godley, trying to follow Washington's instructions to do his "utmost to ensure coordination," reported that he had received no word on the Van de Waele column, "notwithstanding all efforts" all through the night. There would be no simultaneous military pressure, for as Godley also reported, all DRAGON ROUGE aircraft were already on the ground at Stanleyville.<sup>3</sup> Obviously it was a lot easier to fly to Stanleyville than it was to drive there.

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Despite all the fears of disaster, everything went almost like clockwork for the DRAGON ROUGE force. At 0130 hours local time on the twenty-fourth, 3 hours after receiving "PUNCH" from the JCS, the Commander of JTF LEO took off from Kamina to rendezvous over Basoko with Cuban-flown B-26 support aircraft and get a report on the weather at Stanleyville. It was almost perfect. The Cuban pilot reported there was a 1200-foot ceiling, visibility was good for 3 miles with broken cloud cover, and surface winds were less than 6 knots. It was "GO." The first five C-130s, CHALK-1 through CHALK-5, took off at 0300 hours.

At exactly 0600, trailing each other at 20-second intervals, the first five CHALKs dropped 320 paratroopers over the Stanleyville golf course (Map 3) and flew off to Leopoldville. Within a half-hour the paratroopers had seized the airport and cleared most of the water drums, wrecked vehicles, and other obstructions from the runway. Three vehicles had attempted to flee the airfield, two were destroyed and one captured. In one vehicle, beside its dead driver, the troopers found Gbenye's passport, identification card, and vaccination record, plus a sizable sum of money. Except for some sporadic resistance, mostly around the control tower, the rebels had taken to the bush—leaving prepared machine gun positions all around the airfield. The B-26s circling the airfield and looking for targets found none. Total casualties so far: 14-15 bullet holes in the C-130s and three Belgian paratroopers injured in the drop.<sup>4</sup> Everything was going almost too well.

At 0635 hours the telephone rang at the control tower where Colonel Laurent had established his command post. An unidentified voice said that European hostages were at the Victoria Residence Hotel in town—*come quickly*. Five minutes later, a Dutch missionary came to the tower and confirmed the report. Laurent gave the order to move into the city with all possible speed.

In the meantime, with the runways cleared of obstructions, the order was given to land the remaining seven C-130s in accordance with the plan: first, CHALKs-6 and 7 with the eight armored jeeps; then, CHALKs-8 and 9 transporting the company of recruits with 5 1/2 month's training, and, finally, CHALKs-10, 11, and 12 carrying the food, ammunition, medicines, and miscellaneous. CHALK-7 landed at 0645. DRAGON ROUGE had suffered its first mishap: CHALK-6, with four much-needed armored jeeps aboard, would be an hour late.\*

At 0740 hours the lead elements of the 11th Paracommando Company entered the outskirts of Stanleyville, about 3 kilometers from the airport. At each intersection they met sporadic resistance, which the two armored jeeps accompanying the force quickly dispersed. At 0750 they were still several blocks from the Victoria Residence when they heard shooting from the direction of the hotel. Advancing toward the noise they came upon a massacre scene. The rebels had fled. For some hostages it was too late. The padre accompanying the force gave last rites to the dead and dying. The living were hurried to the airfield—including Hoyt and the four other members of the American consulate.

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*At 0600 [on November 24] the hostages in the Residence Victoria were awakened by the sound of a number of planes over-flying the city. Speculation began immediately that this represented the Belgian paratroop drop which had been reported as a possibility on the international radio. There was very little traffic in the town but at 0700 the guards at the*

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\*Shortly after takeoff from Kamina, a panel on the right wing of CHALK-6 popped open "for an as yet unexplained reason" and out came a life raft. The raft inflated, as it was supposed to do, and flopped around the tail controls. For the flying skill necessary to get the plane back on the ground, the pilot, Captain Richard V. Secord, received the Distinguished Flying Cross.

*Residence Victoria knocked on all the doors and ordered all men, women, and children down into the street. Columns began to form up of ranks of three abreast, then Col. Opepe arrived and announced that all the men, women, and children were going to be taken to Stanleyville Airport to prevent its bombardment by American and Belgian planes.*

*There was considerable confusion in organizing the files of hostages, which were directed by perhaps ten Simbas. Hoyt and Grinwis were in the third rank at the head of line but other Americans including Dr. Carlson and the other three members of the consulate staff were scattered back almost to the end of the long triple files. We began walking from the Victoria toward the airport with frequent halts. At a point two blocks from the Victoria, near the Congo Palace Hotel, the column made a right turn in order to go towards the main road to the airport. However, when only half the column had made the turn, leaving the column in an L-shape, we were told to halt. The armed Simba guards took up positions on the inside of this L with Col. Opepe standing more or less near the base of the L. Firing was heard from the direction of the airport throughout these maneuvers.*

*Opepe then made a small speech in Swahili in which he said that he had attempted to protect the Belgians and Americans and that now he believed he was betrayed by these same people who only pretended to be negotiating with the leaders of the revolutionary government.*

*At this point a truck of Simbas arrived from the airport crying out that Belgian paratroopers had landed and invested the airport. Col. Opepe, who had not realized until that moment [that] a parachute drop [had] occurred, then ordered us to sit down in the street where we were. Considerable confusion ensued among the Simbas for the next two or three minutes. Soon, however, very heavy firing was suddenly heard from close by. It is not clear at this point if Opepe ordered his Simbas to fire on the seated people or if a single Simba started the firing and all the others followed suit. In any case the Simbas deliberately began firing with their automatic weapons on the seated Belgians and Americans. During the next five minutes, before the arrival on the spot of the Belgian paratroopers, the Simbas chased and shot all those Europeans who were attempting to escape from the initial Simba field of fire. Hoyt and Grinwis, being at the head of the line, were by accident able to run up a nearby driveway. Mr. Houle remained lying in the street until the paratroopers actually appeared on the scene.*

*Most of the Belgians and Americans, however, attempted to run away from the scene and hide in houses or behind walls and any other place that would hide them from the Simbas. It is during this five minute period that Dr. Carlson and other victims were shot by pursuing Simbas*

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There were about 300 hostages, including 17 Americans, in the Victoria Residence that morning when the Simba guards called them outside. Fifty remained behind, hiding in closets and under beds. In the column of 250 which was marched off toward the airport were about 100 women and children, including Miss Phyllis Rine, a 25-year old missionary teacher from Ohio. Of the dozen or so Simbas guarding the column, luckily only five or six had rifles; the rest had spears and machetes. After the shooting and stabbing, two young girls, five women, and fifteen men were dead or dying, including Miss Rine, bleeding to death from a leg wound. Carlson was killed trying to scale a wall. Forty others were wounded, all Belgians, of whom five would later die.<sup>6</sup>

There had been no command to fire. It seemed to have been spontaneous, triggered no doubt by panic as the guards heard of the approaching "Red Berets." To Godley, however, the impetus for the massacre was clear: the Simbas, like almost the entire Congolese population in Stanleyville, had been "impregnated through long repetition" and the "constantly repeated theme of shouts and threats" that hostages were to be killed if there was an attack against the city.<sup>6</sup>

The paratroopers continued the street-by-street rescue move through the city, engaging in sporadic firefights with disappearing rebels. Around 0900 hours the first paratrooper was wounded, shot in the back; at 0930, the second; at 1000 hours the third was shot entering a house—he would die 2 days later. At 0945 the first plane took off for Leopoldville with 120 evacuees. And at 1100 hours, the four lead vehicles of the Van de Waele column, loaded with mercenaries, linked up with the paratroopers. A half-hour later Van

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<sup>6</sup>Colonel Laurent had ordered his troops to wear their red berets, knowing full well the reputation for toughness and bravery the Belgian paratroopers had made with the Congolese during the colonial period and the days following the mutiny of the *Force Publique*. He reasoned that the berets would give his young recruits more protection than steel helmets.

de Waele arrived at the airfield. He quickly took over responsibility for operations in the city, leaving Laurent's force to guard the airport and get on with the evacuation. Searching and fighting continued throughout the day, including a rather determined rebel attack on the airfield late in the afternoon, which kept seven incoming C-130s orbiting for an hour. The next morning a Belgian airman was killed by sniper fire.<sup>9</sup>

Thirty-seven hours after the drop, Clingerman reported to Godley that all Americans in Stanleyville had been accounted for, the airport was quiet, and a total of 33 foreign civilians had been killed, along with hundreds of Congolese. Roughly 1,500 foreign nationals and 150 Congolese civilians had been evacuated to Leopoldville.<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile, Van de Waele was having trouble getting a force across the Congo River to the city's left bank. When he finally did succeed on the twenty-sixth, using Hoare's troops, it would be too late.\* But again we are ahead of the story.

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In Washington, with H-hour at 2300 on the twenty-third, initial reports on the DRAGON ROUGE assault would be coming in during the wee hours of the morning. The 50-yard long reception room outside Secretary Rusk's office on the seventh floor of the State Department had been converted to a makeshift press headquarters, and at 0140 hours the first release went out to the sleepy newsmen: "With the authority of the Congolese Government. . . ; in conformity with our adherence to the Geneva Convention . . . ; after all efforts at negotiation had failed. . . ; in exercise of our clear responsibility to protect US citizens. . . ;" and the like. At the Ranch, the President stayed up until 4 o'clock, "when the situation appeared reasonably well in hand."<sup>11</sup>

With that, past and current events began to unfold—back through 111 days. One of the front-page headlines told how "Congolese Forced American Officials to Eat US Flag."† The press naturally wondered if there would be other rescue operations, especially since there were other Americans and Belgians outside of Stanleyville. They were told that such operations could not be

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\*Hoare found 28 massacred priests and nuns

†See Journal entry, August 11.

ruled out, however, because the groups of endangered foreign nationals were widely scattered, new rescue operations would be "difficult and time consuming."<sup>12</sup>

It was again time for decision in Washington and Brussels, and again Ambassador Godley was urging action.

### **Dragon Noir**

In Leopoldville early the evening of the twenty-fourth, the day of DRAGON ROUGE with all its good and bad news, Ambassador Godley drafted a cable to Washington strongly recommending proceeding "according to plan" with the assaults on Bunia and Paulis. The plan, of course, was the supplemental plan added to OPLAN 319 by General Dougherty and the Brussels planners in response to the very logical concern over what would happen to foreign nationals in other parts of rebel-held territory as a result of a US/Belgian attack on Stanleyville. At this point there were an estimated 500 Europeans and at least 30 Americans north and northeast of the city. It was the "unanimous belief" among Godley's staff and colleagues that all non-Congolese hostages were in the gravest danger. They anticipated that Simbas would be disappearing into the bush in "well-deserved fear" of the Red Berets, either taking their hostages with them or executing them on the spot. Godley felt that we should take no chances.<sup>13</sup>

The supplemental plan called for three additional rescue operations (see Map 2). First priority was given to Bunia, which the planners felt had the greatest concentration of hostages after Stanleyville. It also had a 6,000-foot, hard-surface runway that would be useful for future operations. Then came Paulis, closest to Stanleyville (225 miles) and having a 4,200-foot compacted earth runway. Last priority was given to Watsa, farthest from Stanleyville (350 miles) and closest to the rebel supply routes coming from Sudan and Uganda. Watsa's airfield, unfortunately, was too short for C-130s, so the plan called for a parachute assault with a ground link-up from Bunia.

In the short time since November 21, however, when Dougherty had forwarded the supplemental plan to Washington, the picture had changed. The 52d Commando unit of mercenaries

was moving toward Paulis after seizing Aketi on November 24.<sup>14</sup> Those rescued in Aketi had disturbing reports about the viciousness of the rebel garrison in Paulis. From interrogation of those rescued in Aketi and Stanleyville, the figures were raised on the number of hostages in Paulis—to include seven Americans, of whom three were women and three were teenagers. Paulis rather than Bunia now seemed the more critical

Again no formal record was found of the considerations leading to decision. As it was with the decision to launch DRAGON ROUGE, the key players probably met in Rusk's office, weighed the many factors, and then Bundy reported the consensual recommendation to the President at the Ranch. Now, however, there seemed to be, perhaps directed by the President himself, more of an inclination to go along with whatever the Belgians wanted to do. After all, their soldiers had suffered the casualties and they had more people to rescue. Again, time was a factor, and the twenty-sixth was set as the earliest date Colonel Laurent's troops could be ready for any subsequent operation. Governor Harriman, on the evening of the twenty-fourth, as he had done on the twenty-second before the DRAGON ROUGE decision, sent a message to Ambassador MacArthur requesting that he get Spaak's "appraisal" (versus "latest judgment") on what to do next.<sup>15</sup>

In several respects a decision to execute any or all of the supplemental plan was more difficult to make than the DRAGON ROUGE decision. Now, the rebels would certainly be alert. Gbenye, Soumialot, and Olenga were probably all in Paulis or Bunia organizing airfield defenses and conducting "lessons learned" sessions starting with Lesson Number 1: HAVE TROOPS AWAKE AND ALERT AT DAWN WITH ALL WEAPONS READY TO FIRE. For the decisionmakers, there was an understandable inclination not to push the odds.

For sure also there would be no help from Colonel Van de Waele. This would mean a get-in, get-out operation leaving behind whatever foreign nationals might be remaining in the area, those missing the plane, to almost certain horrible death as Simbas and *jeunesse* filtered back into control. The massacre near the Victoria Residence had shown and Godley had reported that the Simbas and

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<sup>14</sup>117 adult Europeans and 17 children were rescued at Aketi.

*jeunesse* had no compunction about killing defenseless whites in retaliation for attack against them—before fleeing into the bush. Would additional parachute assaults further kindle, or chasten, the Simbas' resolve to kill? Were further massacres already taking place? Would a well-publicized and immediate withdrawal of DRAGON ROUGE forces back to Belgium provide the gesture needed to inspire magnanimity among rebel leaders vis-a-vis the remaining hostages—perhaps with urging from Kenyatta?

General Adams, who had had grave reservations about DRAGON ROUGE, was now all "GO." As a military commander far from the scene, he felt that the rebels were discouraged and on the run. It was "practically a rout" and pursuit and exploitation represented the next logical course of action. He, like Godley, recommended hitting Bunia and Paulis "in accordance with approved plans," starting on the twenty-sixth, and then moving overland to Watsa. Colonel Laurent, however, as the military commander close to the scene, reported that his troops were tired and his force was too small to carry out simultaneous rescue operations. He recommended limiting the next assault to Paulis, which he would be ready to do on the twenty-sixth with two companies and seven aircraft as planned.<sup>16</sup>

There were also the political aspects, as viewed through variously tinted lenses. As it had turned out, since the Van de Waele column had arrived 5 hours after the parachute assault and there had been therefore, no simultaneous attack, the image of DRAGON ROUGE was more like its press billings: a humanitarian rescue operation, and not a dirty imperialist plot to further the military advance of the mercenaries. Additional rescue operations, far removed from Van de Waele, Hoare, and the ANC, would uphold and promote this image.

On the other hand, the United States and Belgium were already caught up in the world's propaganda meatgrinder. Despite Tshombe's letters, the well-planned press releases, and the diplomatic approaches at highest official levels to anoint DRAGON ROUGE with legality, we were starting to get hit—with rocks as well as words. The Russians, as predicted, made immediate noises about our "gross, active intervention." President Ben Bella declared Algeria would send arms and volunteers to help his Congolese "brothers" fight against Tshombe. Kenyatta condemned the

operation and accused the United States (and Ambassador Attwood) of duplicity while peace talks were in progress. African nations were debating privately in the United Nations, and a special meeting of the OAU was being talked-up for the twenty-sixth. And in Sofia, 400 students stoned the US Legation.<sup>17</sup> Many thought the storm was just beginning. But if the President knuckled under to such criticism and "world opinion," and additional hostages were executed anyway. . . ?

All through the twenty-fifth in Brussels and Washington the soul-searching, lobbying, hand-wringing, and weighing of alternatives continued. It was getting late for a decision to assault on the twenty-sixth. In Brussels that evening there was a small informal gathering of the Congo crisis managers, including the principal Belgian players, at Ambassador MacArthur's residence. MacArthur was in favor of pulling out and had Spaak convinced. Spaak's *Chef de Cabinet*, Viscount Davignon, disagreed and suggested consulting President Lefèvre. Lefèvre arrived at the residence and sided with Davignon. It was now about 2300 hours and MacArthur called Washington, talking directly with Rusk. The Belgians wanted one more rescue operation, MacArthur reported, against Paulis in the morning, and then to get out of the Congo and let the chips fall where they may.<sup>18</sup> In Washington it was about 1700 hours. The Joint Chiefs transmitted the order an hour later, execute DRAGON NOIR on November 26.<sup>19</sup>

In Stanleyville it was now shortly after 1 o'clock in the morning, and two companies of Colonel Laurent's tired paratroopers would have only about an hour before starting to load the C-130s. Take-off would be at 0300 hours. One company would remain at Stanleyville to guard the airfield. Hostages and bodies were still coming in.

In the Congo Working Group there was a flurry of activity, as there was before DRAGON ROUGE, to tie together the diplomatic loose ends.

—For Leopoldville: Godley should see Tshombe "soonest" to ensure his cooperation in making the operation "as palatable internationally as possible"; just to make sure Tshombe would say the right words, a US press release was transmitted for his use; no Americans other than air crews should accompany the DRAGON NOIR force.

Clingerman should remain in Stanleyville and continue reporting.<sup>20</sup>

—For Brussels: MacArthur must ensure that the Belgians understand that the operation should last no more than 24 hours, subject to overriding military exigencies; the force should not "under any circumstances" be allowed to delay its departure from Paulis to permit the ANC to reoccupy the city; within the "shortest possible time" the entire force should redeploy to Belgium; all of which was subject to overriding military contingencies.<sup>21</sup>

—For all African posts: Ambassadors should inform host governments that the United States was conducting a rescue mission to Paulis as an "extension" to the Stanleyville operation and for the same humanitarian reasons (that is, as the "only way" to avert possible tragedy); the rescue force was to complete its humanitarian mission and withdraw "promptly" from the Congo.<sup>22</sup>

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The flight from Stanleyville to Paulis took 52 minutes. Paulis was covered with fog. Arriving over the city at 0600 hours, exactly on schedule, the pilot of the lead plane missed the airfield drop zone and had to circle once to get his bearings—causing a 2-minute delay in the drop and enough time to alert the defenders. It didn't look good. It looked worse when the last paratrooper exiting the lead aircraft was shot in the chest. Miraculously, however, all the other 255 men hit the ground without further casualties, and the four C-130s hauling them received only a few more bullet holes. Enemy fire, according to the Belgian after-action report, had been *violent mais imprécis*. The fog and poor rebel marksmanship had been a blessing.

The operational concept for NOIR was the same as for ROUGE. The assault paratroopers were to drop in the dawn haze, seize the airfield, clear the runway of obstructions, and then call for follow-on aircraft to land with armored jeeps, ammunition, supplies, and so forth. There was one big difference. One company, the 11th (the same one that had led the advance into Stanleyville), instead of

waiting for armored jeeps to be landed, was to move immediately into town in search of hostages. There was a lesson from DRAGON ROUGE, or certainly a question that would plague its chroniclers: how many of the 27 killed in the death march from the Victoria Residence would have been alive had a rescuing force moved immediately into the city while others seized and cleared the runway to bring in the armored jeeps? Carlson, Rine, and the others had been killed almost 2 hours after DRAGON ROUGE CHALK-1 paratroopers had hit the ground.

While 11th Company was moving into the city, 13th Company seized and cleared the airfield. Follow-on CHALKs-5, 6, and 7 started landing at 0640 hours, picking up a few bullet holes in the process. By 0815 hours, there were about 200 refugees at the airport—with tales of horror for the world.<sup>23</sup> On the night of the twenty-fourth, probably reacting to news of the assault on Stanleyville, the rebels had executed 21 Belgians and 1 American. Joseph Tucker, an Assembly of God missionary from Arkansas, was the first to die, after 45 minutes of torture. All bodies had been dumped into the crocodile-infested Bomokandi River.<sup>24</sup> Tucker's wife, his three teenage children, two other American women, and twenty-nine others (mostly Greeks) were rescued unharmed 5 miles outside of town.<sup>25</sup>

All through the day and from first light the next morning patrols went out from the perimeter established around the airfield—one going about 25 miles west of town to rescue six Greeks, two Canadians, and one Belgian. At 1314 hours on the twenty-seventh, after 375 foreign nationals had been freed and evacuated, the DRAGON NOIR force began its withdrawal—an operation that could be more dangerous than the assault. Plane after plane took off, gradually reducing the number of defenders on the perimeter. Officers checked off each paratrooper's name to make sure no one was being left behind to a certain and horrible death. At about 1500 hours the last planeload of thinly stretched defenders, to simulate activity far beyond their numbers, lit firecrackers all around the perimeter, jumped aboard their aircraft, and safely took off—leaving Paulis to the Simbas.

The DRAGON NOIR force had suffered seven casualties: one paratrooper dead; five wounded; and one injured when he hit the ground. By that evening the entire DRAGON force, ROUGE and

NOIR, had been assembled at Kamina—preparing for a victory parade scheduled for the next day.<sup>26</sup> Another parade, with larger crowds anticipated, was being prepared in Brussels.

### **Repercussions and Withdrawal**

In the charged and emotional atmosphere surrounding those refugees who were now safe, the decision to end rescue operations after DRAGON NOIR made no sense at all. Those who had been rescued imagined tortured bodies in Bunia, Watsa, Wamba, and all the other places known to have mission stations, schools, plantations, and settlements of foreigners. Nor did it make sense to many watching from the sidelines. The premature withdrawal of the DRAGON force would cast doubt on the wisdom of the entire operation. Having once triggered rampage, how could the United States and Belgium face those other nations whose nationals left in the Congo might be killed in a spreading hatred of all foreigners? One reporter compared the situation to a shipwreck in which the rescue of survivors is inexplicably called off while heads are still bobbing in the water.<sup>27</sup>

Shortly after noon on the twenty-sixth, Ambassador Godley again picked up the cudgel. He had just heard of the atrocities in Paulis. He had also just received a copy of an issue of the rebel newspaper *Le Martyr*, found in Stanleyville, in which Gbenye had written: "We will make our fetishes out of the hearts of Americans and Belgians, and we will clothe ourselves in their skins." Those rescued in Paulis had reported that they, too, probably would have been killed one by one if the paratroopers had not arrived. Godley was convinced that the "Paulis experience" would be repeated wherever there were whites. To cancel the Bunia-Watsa operations now could result in a major catastrophe. It would put in question our humanitarian motives. ("Would it not be said we carried out humanitarian operations only in militarily strategic cities of Stan and Paulis and left other non-Congolese to their fate?") He "urgently" requested that Washington reconsider the decision calling off the DRAGON operations.<sup>28</sup>

Dean Rusk personally drafted the reply to Godley. The decision not to undertake the Bunia and Watsa operations had been taken "at highest levels [of] US and Belgian Governments." The

decision for further employment rested largely with the Belgians since their troops were most heavily involved and the rescues would relate mostly to their nationals. There were many considerations, Rusk wrote, to include the "possibility that [the] Congo's eastern neighbors might be stimulated to systematic aggression against [the] Congo." In any event, Rusk told Godley that attempts would be made through the OAU and the Red Cross to get assistance for the remaining hostages.<sup>29</sup> It is doubtful, based on the previous record of the OAU and the Red Cross in the Congo, that this gave the US Ambassador to the Congo much reassurance.

While Rusk was writing his reply to Godley, two events were unfolding that, had Rusk known, might have given him pause. On the twenty-seventh, Mike Hoare's commandos returned from Stanleyville's left bank—with the bodies of 24 priests and 4 Spanish nuns. The priests had been herded into a small prison cell; rebels had fired on them, and then for the coups de grace, had slit their throats. The nuns had been hacked to death.<sup>30</sup> Also on the twenty-seventh, Godley reported that there were indications that a thousand foreign nationals, including 200 Belgians and 1 American, had been concentrated at Wamba, 50 miles south of Paulis. Paulis refugees feared that the killing had already begun.<sup>31</sup> They did not know it at the time, but they were right.\*

The blare of propaganda drowned out the cries of the tortured. It was a made-to-order issue, but no one quite expected the intensity and viciousness of the tirades—or the blatant racism. A black government of national liberation, the media churned, struggling against a corrupt and propped-up stooge of imperialism, attacked by hired South African thugs and CIA-hired Cuban pilots, had now been attacked by white force—of neo-colonialism at the very moment when negotiations were taking place to secure the safety of all. The United States and Belgium, indifferent for 4 years to thousands of black cadavers, had found the fate of a handful of whites sufficient grounds to invoke humanitarian reasons to justify their carefully prepared aggression. Said the *Ghana Times*: "In these days, barely any trouble starts anywhere in the world in which the finger of the US is not found on the trigger." And again the next day: "White sadist mercenaries laugh and shout as they go on their rampage."<sup>33</sup>

\*When Wamba was recaptured about a month later, the rescuers uncovered the story of how the rebels had killed 30 hostages on the day of the DRAGON NOIR assault. One American, a missionary named William McChesney, had been trampled to death. The bodies had been thrown into a river.<sup>32</sup>

There was something else, again racial in overtone, which did not appear in print or over the radio, but nevertheless probably inspired much of the bitterness. Approximately 500 white soldiers had scattered an army of thousands of black soldiers in the middle of Africa, captured their capital, all in only a day or so, and with the announced loss of only one trooper. It had been a cruel shattering of illusions.

Then came the fire and rocks. The twenty-sixth, the day of DRAGON NOIR, was an especially bad day and possibly more than anything else served to end additional DRAGON operations. In Nairobi, where Dean Rusk had told Godley he was hoping to find OAU support, mobs bombed diplomatic cars around the US, Belgian, and British Embassies—following calls for demonstrations broadcast over the Voice of Kenya. Embassy windows were stoned in Prague, and in Cairo 2,000 demonstrators burned to the ground the 270,000-volume John F. Kennedy Memorial Library. On the twenty-eighth in Moscow, 1,500 demonstrators invaded the Congolese Embassy and then marched on the US, Belgian, and British Embassies, defacing them all. Tass called it a "spontaneous meeting," but Soviet newsmen were seen loitering around before any demonstrators arrived. Thousands marched in Belgrade.<sup>34</sup> In Peking on the twenty-ninth, 700,000 rallied to hear Mao denounce US aggression.

The words and speeches—and often fire and rocks—would go on for another month. There would be a quick OAU resolution bitterly condemning US and Belgian imperialism and intervention, and on December 5, the US Information Service Library in Djakarta would be burned to the ground. In the chambers of the United Nations, speaker after speaker would condemn the "nefarious action" and "crude subterfuge," causing Ambassador Stevenson to reply that never in his 7 years in the United Nations had he heard language so "irrational, irresponsible, insulting, and repugnant."<sup>35</sup> Needless to say, Tshombe and Kasavubu would find such debate and pronouncements flagrant interference in the Congo's affairs. In actual fact, Tshombe at this point was looking around for another 500 mercenaries.

The decision was made to withdraw the DRAGON force for one or all of the following reasons: because of the propaganda fallout; because the Congo's neighbors might be "stimulated" to

further aggression; because further operations might trigger further executions; because those to be rescued were too scattered or their whereabouts unknown; because there were few airfields the C-130s could use; because the paratroopers were tired and too few in number; because . . . ? It is interesting to recall Governor Harriman's thoughts, recorded in October 1977 at his home in the Georgetown section of the Nation's capital:

They wanted us to go to a third place, [Bunia] but I rather reluctantly agreed with the majority that we ought to get out. We said we were going in fast and get out fast, and those who wanted to get out fast won. My instinct was to go and do the job well. On the other hand, we'd been so successful with these two places we might have flopped with the third, and therefore the counsels of caution won. I accepted it and went along quite happily, that it was just as well not to press our luck even though there was a great appeal from a lot of people to get the Europeans out.<sup>36</sup>

A member of the Congo Working Group put it another way. As he remembers it: "We got cold feet."<sup>37</sup>

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Accordingly, the DRAGON force, having assembled at Kamina the afternoon of November 27, flew away from the Congo at dawn on the twenty-ninth—back through Ascension and Las Palmas to a tickertape parade through the streets of Brussels. Not since Liberation Day in 1944, said the Belgian press, had a military unit been welcomed with such crowds and wild acclaim. The marchers did not, however, include anyone from the US 464th Troop Carrier Wing, Colonel Burgess Gradwell commanding. They had been instructed by Washington "to remain in the background."<sup>38</sup> Nor did the President, in his press conference on November 28, mention one word of thanks or congratulations to the American airmen who had put their lives on the line. Johnson was still keeping the lid on.

Back in Stanleyville, the fighting continued. John Clingerman felt that some official recognition should be given to Mike Hoare and his mercenaries for their significant role in rescuing hostages. (Hoare had just come back from the city's left bank with 28 bodies and 6 survivors.) Godley agreed and thought it would mean more if the pat on the back came from Washington—perhaps from General

Adams or General Wheeler. Washington's answer was quick and in keeping with Johnson's guidance: the United States must continue to avoid any open identification with mercenaries; however, we see no objection to "private, informal *oral* word of appreciation to Hoare on appropriate occasion."<sup>39</sup>

There were many others for whom the mercenaries would mean salvation. There were at this point, according to a check by the press of all embassies in Leopoldville, well over 900 foreign nationals still somewhere in rebel-held territory.<sup>40</sup> So in the coming months there would be many, many "appropriate occasions" when words, and more often tears, of appreciation would fall on Mike Hoare and his "Wild Geese."

## Endnotes

- 1 Mike Hoare, *Congo Mercenary* (London: Robert Hale and Co 1967), p 119
- 2 Ibid , pp. 119-121
3. Message, Embassy Leopoldville 2089 to Department of State (received 240443 November 1964).
- 4 After-action Report, Belgian Paracommando Regiment
5. Colonel Robert A Lindsay, unpublished manuscript, pp 12-13
- 6 David Reed, *111 Days in Stanleyville* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), pp 251-259.
7. Interview, Governor W Averell Harriman, 21 October 1977
8. Message, Embassy Leopoldville 2141 to Department of State (received 251237 November 1964)
- 9 After-action Report, Belgian Paracommando Regiment
10. Message, Embassy Leopoldville 2147 to Department of State (received 251918 November 1964).
11. Department of State Press Release 499, 24 November 1964.
12. *New York Times*, 25 November 1964, pp 1, 16
13. Message, Embassy Leopoldville 2111 to Department of State (received 241615 November 1964)

- 14 Message, COMUSJTF LEO 1125 to CINCSTRIKE/MEAFSA (received 252016 November 1964)
- 15 Message, Department of State 1179 to Embassy Brussels (transmitted 241959 November 1964)
- 16 Message, CINCSTRIKE/MEAFSA STRIKE 12594 to JCS (received 250309 November 1964), message, Embassy Leopoldville 2136 to Department of State (received 250720 November 1964)
- 17 *New York Times*, 26 November 1964, pp 1, 16
- 18 Interview, Robert M Beaudry, 13 October 1977 Interestingly, at this gathering there was no representation from the military, either Belgian or American
- 19 Message, JCS 002323 to CINCSTRIKE/MEAFSA (DTG 252309Z November 1964)
- 20 Message, Department of State 1436 to Embassy Leopoldville (transmitted 251716 November 1964)
- 21 Message, Department of State 1185 to Embassy Brussels (transmitted 252003 November 1964).
- 22 Message, Department of State Circular 1034 to All African Posts (transmitted 260023 November 1964).
- 23 After-action Report, Belgian Paracommando Regiment
- 24 *New York Times*, 27 November 1964, p 1
- 25 After-action Report, Belgian Paracommando Regiment
- 26 Ibid., After-action Report, Belgian General Headquarters, June 1965, pp. 34, 37
- 27 Historical Report, US European Command, DRAGON ROUGE November-December 1964, p. 84.
- 28 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 216x to Department of State (received 261254 November 1964); message, Embassy Leopoldville 2160 to Department of State (received 260821 November 1964)
- 29 Message, Department of State 1443 to Embassy Leopoldville (transmitted 261706 November 1964)
- 30 *New York Times*, 28 November 1964, p 1
- 31 Message, Embassy Leopoldville 2194 to Department of State (received 271552 November 1964)
- 32 *New York Times*, 1 January 1965, p 3

- 33 Message, Embassy Accra 426 to Department of State (received 260802 November 1964)
- 34 *New York Times*, 27 November 1964, p 1, and 29 November 1964, p 1
- 35 *Department of State Bulletin*, 4 January 1965, p 15
- 36 Interview, Governor W Averell Harriman, 21 October 1977.
- 37 Interview, Ambassador William Schaufele, 23 November 1977
- 38 Historical Report, US European Command, p 84
- 39. Message, Department of State 1455 to Embassy Leopoldville (transmitted 272025 November 1964) Writer's emphasis
- 40 *New York Times*, 29 November 1964, p 1.

## Summary

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From a purely military standpoint the DRAGON operations had been a resounding success. Military assessments had been made, entailing the acceptance of considerable risk by people who would be staking their lives and reputations on the accuracy of these assessments. These judgments had led to the seizing of two cities in the heart of Africa and the rescue and evacuation of over 2,000 hostages by a force of barely 600 men, with only 3 soldiers killed and 7 wounded. The decision in the DRAGON ROUGE operation to await the arrival of the armored jeeps before proceeding into the city in search of hostages was the only questionable military judgment—unfortunate, but understandable. In DRAGON NOIR the judgment was corrected.

And what risks there were! Given the problems faced—the lack of detailed intelligence of the enemy, the absence of any pattern or experience factors for a combined US/Belgian airborne operation, the difficulty in maintaining secrecy over long geographical distances, the restrictions placed on support aircraft piloted by Cuban pilots (three languages spoken in the heat of battle!), the urgency with which military planning was done and the operations carried out, not to mention the almost complete inexperience of the young Belgian trainees who would do most of the fighting—the chances for disaster were unbounded! True, the rebel soldiers were poorly trained (what if they had effectively manned the automatic weapons emplaced around the Stanleyville airport?), and rebel

leadership was unbelievably lacking (what if they had believed the public pronouncements of US/Belgian intentions and had alerted their troops accordingly?). But the good fortune in having an untrained enemy with inept leadership should not detract from the very real military accomplishment, or from the superb cooperation between allies that made the accomplishment possible.

From a humanitarian standpoint, measured by the safety of the maximum number of hostages, the success of the DRAGON operations is not so obvious. Certainly the paratroopers' attack on Stanleyville was the immediate stimulus for 27 deaths near the Victoria Residence Hotel, and probably in vengeance for DRAGON ROUGE at least another 50 hostages were soon executed on Stanleyville's left bank and in Paulis. By mid-December, with the discovery of the massacre at Wamba, 185 white hostages and thousands of Congolese had been executed.<sup>1</sup> How many of those executed would have lived had there been no DRAGON operations? This is a question that would plague decisionmakers in future crises involving the seizure of hostages.

At the time it was the sincere view of many observers white and black, that the Simbas and *jeunesse* had overreacted in their anger when they heard of airborne assaults coming at the same time they believed a peace conference was under way in Nairobi. If this view is valid, however, what would have been the reaction and fate of the hostages had Van de Waele's column attacked Stanleyville without the paratroopers, with Hoare's hated and feared mercenaries leading the charge, and with the ANC following behind to "mop up"? Would Carlson, Rine, Tucker, and McChesney have met the same fate, beside a dusty road on a death march to the north—perhaps along with Hoyt and the other four consular officials?

The Simba Rebellion was an extreme example of complete social disintegration and anarchy, accompanied by modern power politics interwoven with traditional ethnic conflicts. Ineffectual leaders tried to grab a wobbly power base to further their own ambitions and it ran away with them. At first, the strategy of holding hostages was designed to play for time to mount an airlift of weapons and advisors from Algeria, the United Arab Republic, and other "friends." Then, when supplies were slow in coming and the rebels suffered military reverses, the strategy changed from holding hostages to threats to kill them in an effort to slow the advance. With

the passage of time, the more the rhetoric by rebel leaders penetrated the thinking of the rank and file, the less able were the leaders to propose action contrary to the rhetoric. This probably sealed the fate of Carlson, with or without the DRAGON operations. After Gbenye, a weak man trying to stay on top, had fabricated the charge that thousands of American soldiers were fighting against them, he felt compelled to produce at least one. How many others would he have had to produce?

From a crisis management standpoint, a failure in the Johnson administration's handling of the Congo crisis was in not realizing the nature of the enemy, and that with the passage of time and the concomitant increase in rhetoric, no nonviolent solution would be possible. Starting with the mutiny of the *Force Publique*, through the massacres in South Kasai, the murders of the Italian airmen in Kindu, and the atrocity reports coming out of Mulele's Kwilu Province, there were certainly enough stories of chaos, genocide, and cannibalism being reported to realize that rebellion in the Congo presented special problems. With the seizure of the Consulate on August 5, some hard decisions had to be made quickly. It was time to declare, as the unknown staff officer later wrote into an annex of the GOLDEN HAWK plan, that the United States would not allow its citizens "legitimately in a country to be harassed, imprisoned, or otherwise molested." Had Operation FLAGPOLE been properly conceived and executed, it would have saved weeks of hand-wringing and decision-pondering later on—and undoubtedly would have saved lives as well.

Such realization came hard in an administration whose African policymakers were imbued with Kennedy-inspired feelings of universal benevolence in Africa. With Governor Williams and the Africa Bureau, university students, Africa study programs and lobbies, the United States in 1964 had many romantics and idealists who saw Africa as one continent and were working hard to build good relations throughout the continent. They felt the United States could deal with the Congo rebellion through the Kenyattas, Nyereres, Selassies, and even the Nkrumahs of Africa over the higher issues of what was good for Africa—working, they hoped, to eliminate racial injustices, redirect radical African nationalism, and promote purposeful independence. Stanleyville and the vituperative repercussions following the DRAGON operations opened many eyes to the realities of African politics, but in the

process it took 111 days and wasted thousands of lives, mostly African lives.

Between the activists and the idealists there were others who were wondering what the United States was doing in the Congo in the first place, and why the United States had to run around the world rescuing missionaries who had been warned of the dangers and should have returned home long ago. There were other basic dilemmas. Should the United States provide planes and Cuban pilots for Tshombe? Was the Congo worth saving? If the United States got out altogether, would the rebels release our diplomats? Wasn't chaos in the Congo a Belgian and African responsibility? Did the United States get involved because of a "kneejerk" reaction to Communism? If so, was a Communist takeover of the vast, chaotic morass of the Congo really a serious possibility? Or did Johnson get involved because collapse of Tshombe, the "only full-fledged pro-Western leader" the Congo had, might have provided Goldwater with the same issue he had back in 1963 when the United States and the United Nations kicked Tshombe out of Katanga? One thing was sure: once the United States decided to support Tshombe, then certain other policies and objectives became impossible—for example, diplomatic approaches over the Congo to the Organization of African Unity, the United Nations, and even to some NATO allies.

Unlike Kennedy, President Johnson did not know Africa nor have any desire to wrap himself in any of its problems—especially with elections approaching, his domestic programs taking form, and, of course, Vietnam. He was not alone. In the early 1960s the sudden emergence of penniless and often boisterous young African states calling themselves nations filled many Americans, if they thought of it at all, with contempt and disdain. This was exacerbated by the violent emergence in the United States of the black civil rights movement. Therefore, an international incident any place in Black Africa in mid-1964 was an event at the wrong time, at the wrong place, and with the wrong people for an American politician. Johnson, years later, did not even reflect upon it. In all of *The Vantage Point*, he wrote not one word about Carlson, Tshombe, Stanleyville, or even the Congo!

Considering the varied, heated, and often emotional views on the Congo, a striking aspect of the whole Congo crisis, at least until

Spaak announced that there was a combined US/Belgian rescue force poised on Ascension, was the almost complete success of the administration in keeping details of the crisis from the public. An American Consulate was seized; five US diplomats imprisoned, held hostage and in real jeopardy of their lives; over a thousand foreign nationals trapped; occasional stories of atrocities appeared and emotions heated as racial tensions ran high—it was a course heading for collision, onrushing tragedy was in the air, and the public knew little about it!! Johnson and his crisis managers had adroitly prevented a collision course in the Congo from becoming a racial and political collision in the United States.

Obviously, the administration's management of the crisis received acquiescence not only from the press, but also from most of Congress, to include Barry Goldwater. It seemed as though the press and government were actually cooperating in keeping the public in the dark, or at least following the President's wishes, in holding down the "noise level." Certainly the geographical isolation of Stanleyville, as well as the dangers reporters perceived (with good reason) in penetrating rebel-held territory for a story, reduced the chance of generating any growing public impatience to "do something" in the Congo. The creation of the ad hoc Congo Working Group kept the day-in, day-out administration of the crisis secluded within the State Department, and the President's designation of Governor Harriman to "pay particular attention to Africa" kept the reporting channel direct to the White House. This was Johnson's style, operating out of his hip pocket and sending people out as extensions of the White House. It would work for him in the Congo in 1964, but it would not work for him in later years, in other places, and other crises. Nor would it work for future Presidents in future such crises.

Considering the military action that eventually evolved, it is interesting to note how little the Pentagon and the military were involved in the decisionmaking and crisis-handling processes. It was still too early in the Johnson administration for any military personality or clique to be considered as part of his hip pocket operation or one of his White House extensions; that too would come later. The memory of the Bay of Pigs fiasco was no doubt also fresh in the minds of the Kennedy holdovers who were still advising the President. They remembered what they considered as bad advice which had come out of the Pentagon. General Adams in

Florida, with his frequent blasts to the Joint Chiefs to keep sound military principles in mind, was considered too hawkish for the moment, and was for the most part ignored. The Joint Chiefs, except for General Wheeler's frequent contact with Harriman, functioned more as a communication center than as a decisionmaking body.<sup>3</sup> And sometimes, communications were not even sent to them.\*

In managing the crisis and in curbing information on what was happening inside Stanleyville, the big danger for the President was that he might appear impotent and as not having fulfilled his obligation if all hell broke loose in Stanleyville or in rebel-held territory. Between the cancellation of Operation FLAGPOLE on August 7 and the creation of the GOLDEN HAWK force in mid-September, Johnson had no military option. Then with GOLDEN HAWK and later HIGH BEAM plans created, the danger was that he would be caught by the public with available but unused options.

This was the problem behind the use of the T-28s and the order to stand-down on the use of all aircraft. Every time Cuban pilots dropped a bomb, Stanleyville became more strident and more threatening, and Johnson faced being caught with his unused options. Then, with the DRAGON ROUGE plan in the files and the Van de Waele column moving closer and closer to Stanleyville, it became increasingly impossible for him *not* to act. Having created the DRAGON ROUGE option, this foreclosed other options, to include letting Van de Waele, with Hoare's mercenaries leading the way, take Stanleyville alone. This thought was undoubtedly on Ambassador Godley's mind when he cabled Washington on the twenty-first, before the DRAGON ROUGE decision had been made: If the hostages are massacred while DRAGON ROUGE forces are sitting only 2 hours away at Kamina, "we will be in terrible trouble."

There is an interesting letter on file in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library in Austin, Texas, which reflects the public view

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\* A good example of this occurred on November 22, when the DRAGON ROUGE force was poised at Kamina and 'if and when' decision time was approaching. Secretary Rusk, like so many others, had doubts about the chances for military success. So he sent a "FROM SECRETARY TO SPAAK" telegram to Brussels to find out what Spaak felt about getting French and British military help as a follow-on in case of "unanticipated difficulties" and in preference to employing more Belgian or US forces. There is no record that the message was ever formally coordinated with the Pentagon.

calling for strong Presidential action, of which Godley was mindful when he advised Washington to launch DRAGON ROUGE. It was written to McGeorge Bundy on 1 December 1964, by Frederick Praeger, the president of a large publishing house. The writer, angered by the repercussions to the DRAGON operations, wrote:

If we are going to be damned anyway, because we dare to rescue a group of people threatened with death and mutilation, we should have done this firmly, openly, with dignity and, if you wish, defiantly. . . . The President should have stated the case to the world and felt obliged to save these people. . . . All I can do as an ordinary citizen is to implore you [Bundy] to use your influence to play our hand more strongly.<sup>5</sup>

In view of the President's silence on the subject, it is difficult to assess the impact of Stanleyville on his handling of subsequent foreign crises. If he felt any criticism, it was probably over views such as those presented by Praeger, charging that he had failed to act "firmly, openly, with dignity. . . ." This was the sort of critique that would cut any President deeply, especially one like Johnson.

Johnson had inherited Kennedy's crisis management team, a team that, because of the failure of bold initiative in the Bay of Pigs operation, was generally predisposed against boldness in all fields. The 111 days of the Stanleyville crisis revealed to the President his inheritance, perhaps for the first time. During his next big crisis, in April 1965 in the Dominican Republic, in another rescue operation, "once he moved, he moved with power and decisiveness to assure the outcome." Then there was Vietnam. After all, if the United States could impose its will in the Congo—keep the Communists out, install a pro-Western government, put down a popular uprising, and keep the whole affair under cover—why not in Vietnam, too?

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There have been many echoes from DRAGON ROUGE since November 1964. The Stanleyville crisis was the forerunner of many later incidents of international terrorism where hostages were seized or people subjected to various forms of threat, forcing governments to take violent action—in Africa, for example, by the Israelis at Entebbe, by the West Germans at Mogadishu, and by the French, Belgians, and Americans at Kolwezi. As a sign of the times, or perhaps as a lesson from Stanleyville, none of these three more

recent incidents took more than a week to settle, none of the nations involved being willing to be drawn into a long soap opera between threat and decision. There is always an intent to negotiate and no government wants to trigger a catastrophe. Now, however, governments and their constituents have become increasingly less tolerant, and no national leader, at least in the Western world, would be afforded the opportunity, as Johnson was in 1964, to keep another Stanleyville relatively isolated from public attention and critique.

### Endnotes

1. *New York Times*, 30 December 1964, p. 1
2. William Attwood, *The Reds and the Blacks* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 206
3. Interview, General Johnson, 1 December 1977.
4. Message, Department of State 1133 to Embassy Brussels (transmitted 221200 November 1964).
5. Letter, Frederick A. Praeger to McGeorge Bundy, 1 December 1964.
6. Arthur M. Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), p. 626

## Epilogue

# 8

The rebellion in the eastern Congo was far from over with the seizure of the Popular Republic's capital at Stanleyville. The rebel army retreated north and east, dispersed into small pockets in the mountains and bush, and emerged time after time to seize an isolated village or a plantation, or otherwise embarrass the central government. In fact, this is largely the situation today—now it is almost a way of life.

On 29 March 1965, Hoare and his commando units reached Watsa near the Sudan/Uganda frontier, where DRAGON VERT was to have taken place. There they heard the story of 38 Belgians who had been massacred in a nearby forest.<sup>1</sup> With the fall of Watsa the government declared the rebellion crushed. Barely a month later, the rebels killed 52 Europeans near Buta and vanished into the bush with 42 hostages. On 19 February 1966, a thousand rebels, still ignoring the government's declaration that the rebellion had been crushed, attacked a Belgian sugar plantation at Kaliba near the Uganda border.<sup>2</sup>

Hoare continued to command the mercenaries through what he called (in his book) "the last battle," the seizing of the rebel stronghold in the mountains along Lake Tanganyika. By the end of November 1966, the last pocket of resistance around Yungu had been scattered. Hoare received a letter of thanks and his "walking papers" from General Mobutu, flew home to Durban, and then

began a cruise around the world in his 38-foot yacht. Leopoldville again declared that the war was over.<sup>3</sup> Almost 10 years later, a "mysterious band of Africans," wearing uniforms and carrying machineguns, rifles, and pistols, crossed Lake Tanganyika by motorboat to Tanzania, seized four white students from Jane Goodall's chimpanzee research center at Gombe Stream National Park, 14 miles north of Kigoma, and returned to their mountain stronghold in Zaire to await payment of ransom.<sup>4</sup> Apparently the "mysterious band" came from a pocket of resistance Hoare had missed in his last battle.

The leaders of the rebel regime fled ahead of their army—soon turning up in Nairobi, Cairo, and other capitals where Presidents were friendly and Communist embassies could be tapped for handouts. Gbenye was once reported as having crossed the Sudan border in a Rolls Royce expropriated along the way. Olenga remained for a while with his army, at least the part of it which was safely across the Sudan frontier. In mid-1965, the Khartoum Government threw him in jail, charging that he had been caught conspiring with Sudan's rebel movement.<sup>5</sup> Soumialot went back to his old haunts around Bujumbura and disappeared—perhaps to the area whence the "mysterious band" originated.

Apparently Thomas Kanza's involvement as Gbenye's Foreign Minister gave him an entree to the academic world: in 1979 he was teaching politics at the University of Massachusetts in Boston. Pierre Mulele was not so smart. He believed the Congolese Government's offer of a general amnesty and in late September 1968, he crossed the Congo River from Brazzaville to Leopoldville aboard the presidential yacht. Nine days later he was executed by a firing squad.

For Governor Harriman the Congo crisis was but one small episode in an illustrious career in government spanning over 40 years. Approaching 90 he is still active in social and political circles, and is still asked by Presidents and senior officials to "pay particular attention" to subjects of major importance.

Ambassador Godley went on to two important ambassadorships—in Laos and Lebanon—and is now living in retirement in Morris, New York, a small town founded by his ancestors before the Revolutionary War.

Of the two generals most prominently involved, General Adams retired close to his former STRICOM headquarters in Tampa, Florida; and General Dougherty added three more stars to the one he wore to Brussels, commanded the Strategic Air Command, retired, and is now living in Arlington, Virginia.

William Brubeck, the White House liaison to the Congo Working Group, recently retired from government, returned to Harvard, and is the managing editor of *Daedalus*.

Mike Hoyt has had several more peaceful and pleasant assignments in the foreign service and is now with the US Mission in Geneva. His deputy in Stanleyville, David Grinwis, who wrote the journal around which this story has been woven, is in Washington, DC.

Moise Tshombe accomplished exactly what he had been called upon to do when Kasavubu gave him the prime minister's job a month before the rebels seized Stanleyville—he had united the country and was winning the war. In the process, he became a national hero, the first since Lumumba, and in the national elections in April 1965, the people gave him a sweeping victory. Apparently this was more than Kasavubu had foreseen—having a presidential rival with a national following—and on 13 October 1965, he dismissed Tshombe.

In the political turmoil of the following weeks, the man with the real power, the Commander in Chief of the *Armée Nationale Congolaise*, decided it was time to end the squabbling. Exactly 1 year after DRAGON ROUGE, Lieutenant General Joseph Desiré Mobutu seized power in a bloodless coup, installed himself as President, and later gave himself a new name (Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu Waza Banga) which means "that all-powerful warrior who, because of his endurance and inflexible will to win, will go from conquest to conquest, leaving fire in his wake."<sup>6</sup>

Kasavubu, after a short period of house arrest, was given a permanent seat in the senate, and died a few years later. Personnel contacted in the Embassy of Zaire in Washington do not remember him as the "father of his country" and could not even recall the date of his death.

Tshombe flew off to his old haunts in Europe, still a rival for power, and in May 1966 he was charged with high treason for plotting an insurrection in—of all places—Stanleyville. A year later while enroute to Majorca, his plane was mysteriously skyjacked by French gunmen and flown to Algiers. There he was imprisoned in a series of military camps and heavily guarded villas, while Mobutu bargained for extradition proceedings, and rumors circulated of rescue plots by mercenary groups representing various interests. Exactly 2 years to the day after the kidnapping, on 30 June 1969, "Darling Moses" Tshombe died at the age of 49, leaving a widow and 10 children in Brussels. The "only full-fledged pro-Western leader" the Congo had had died a natural death, in his sleep, cause not listed—so the newspapers said.<sup>7</sup>

### Endnotes

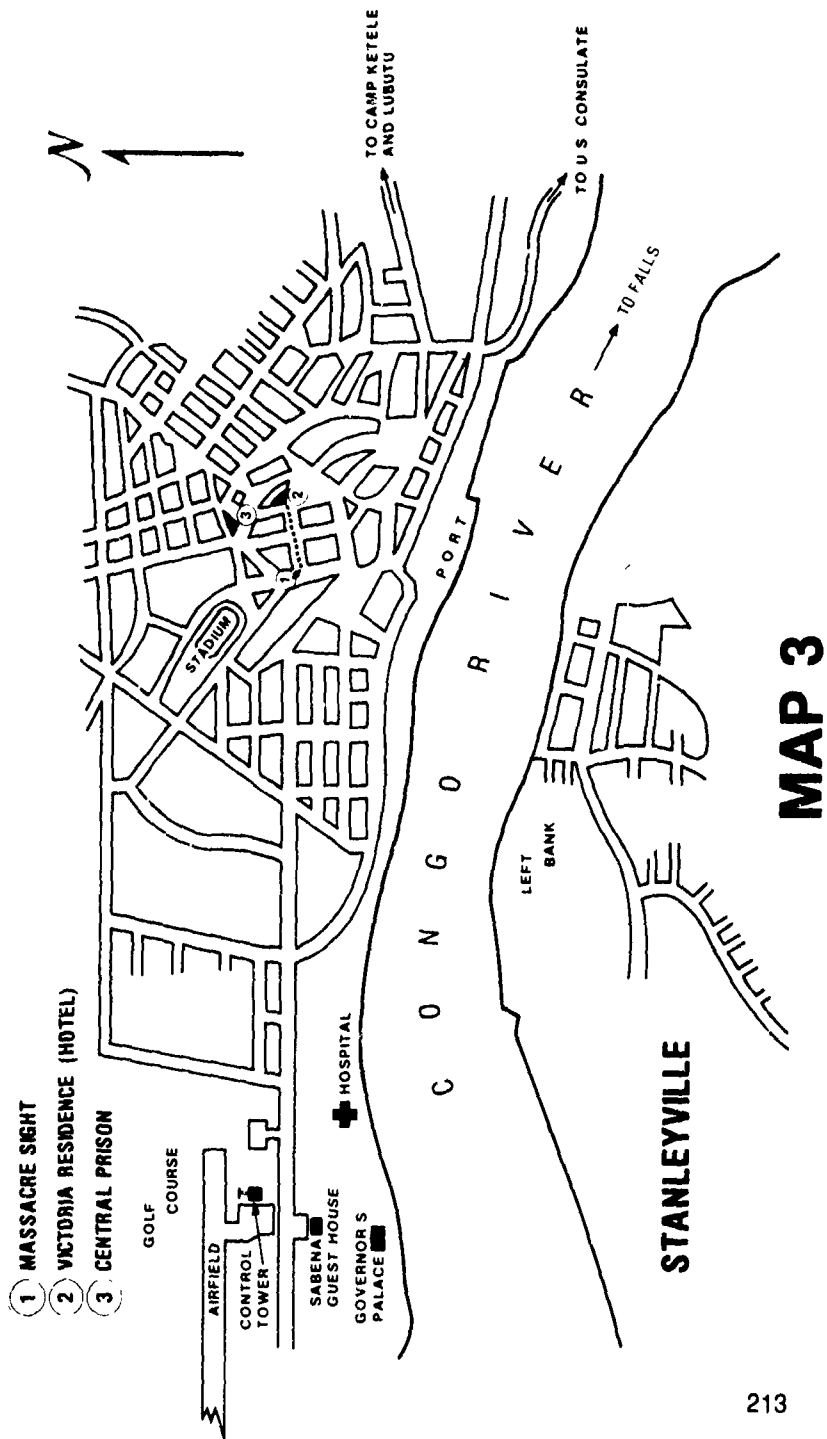
1. Mike Hoere, *Congo Mercenary* (London: Robert Hale and Co., 1967), p. 210.
2. *Time*, 11 June 1965, p. 41.
3. *Time*, 17 December 1965, p. 30.
4. *Newsweek*, 2 June 1975, pp. 35-36; *National Geographic*, May 1979, p. 55.<sup>a</sup> The students, three Americans and one Dutch, were released 2 months later upon payment of a ransom.
5. *Time*, 24 September 1965, p. 41.
6. *Who's Who in Africa* (London: African Buyer and Trader Publications, Ltd., 1973), p. 566.
7. *Time*, 11 July 1969, p. 30; *New York Times*, 30 June 1969.



**MAP 1**

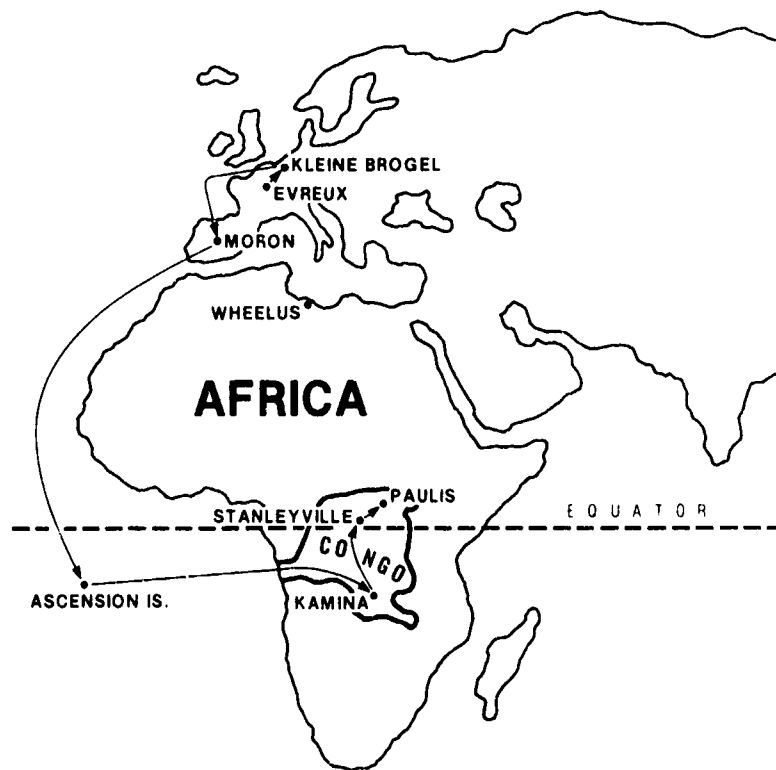


**MAP 2**



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**MAP 4**

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